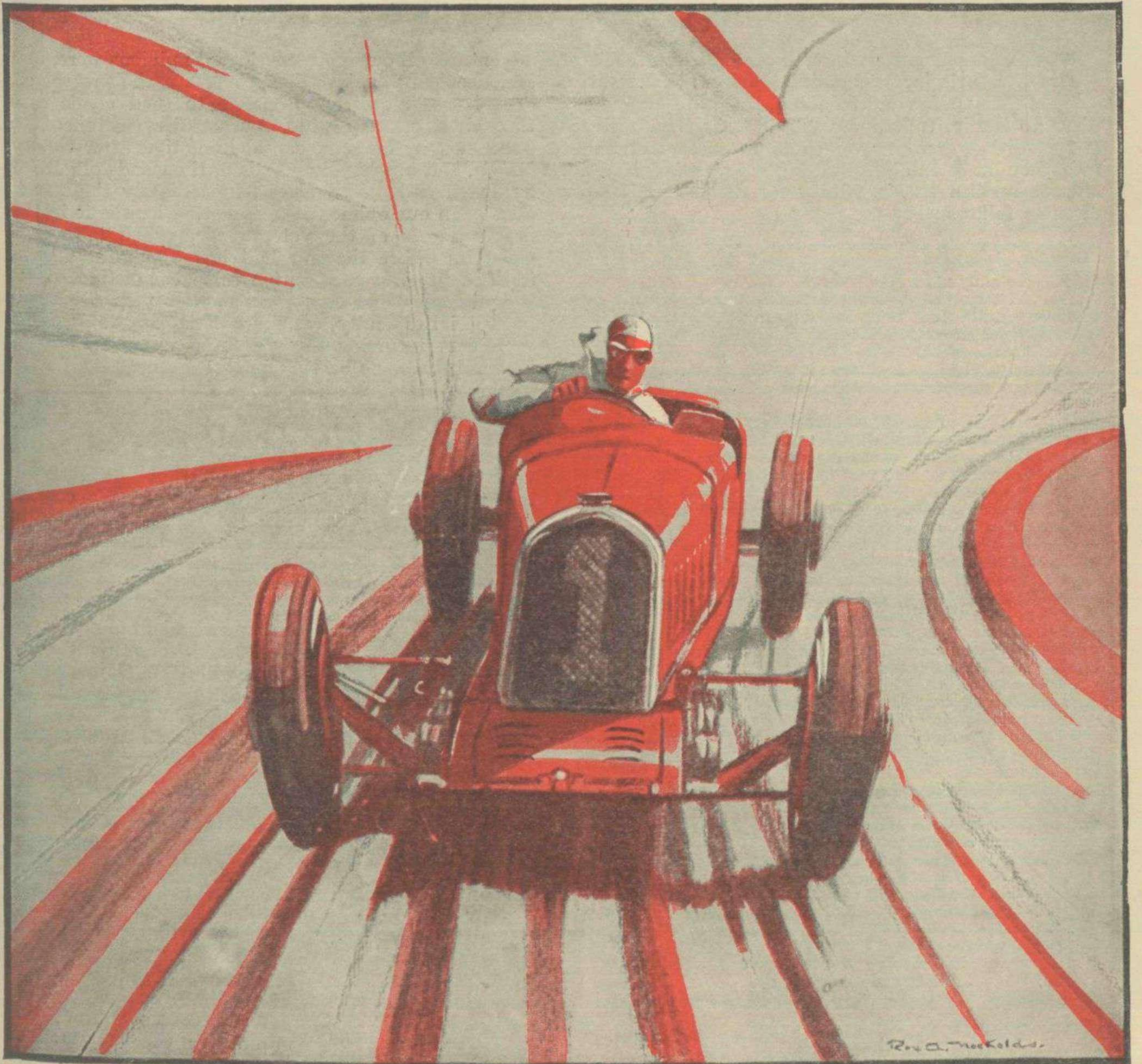


# MOTOR SPORT

INCORPORATING  
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ONE SHILLING  
MONTHLY



# MOTOR SPORT



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH RACING DRIVERS' CLUB

INCORPORATING SPEED AND  
THE BROOKLANDS GAZETTE

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## TOO FANTASTIC

**T**HE announcement by the Veteran Car Club of Great Britain, through its chairman, G. J. Allday, of Weybridge Automobiles, Ltd., of a Victory Run to Berlin, to happen as soon after the Armistice as conditions permit, seemed to us so fantastic that we thought a mild leg-pull was being indulged in. So we applied to Mr. Allday for details. His reply was as follows:—

23rd October, 1941.

Dear Sir,

It is certainly not a joke!

This Victory Run to Berlin will take place immediately conditions permit. It is being sponsored by the Austin Company in collaboration with my Club, who will be responsible for organising the event.

Naturally, at the present time it is difficult, if not impossible, to fix any very definite details, but a broad conception is as follows:—

- (1) That this event will be held directly conditions permit.
- (2) That competitors will have to reach Berlin with their cars within seven days of leaving English shores.
- (3) That cars manufactured up to the end of 1910 only will be eligible.
- (4) That cars which may be so old, or in such a decrepit state, or in an unroadworthy condition, as to render their likelihood of reaching Berlin almost an impossibility, will not be accepted as entries.

I have called a meeting of my Committee to consider and fix as far as possible the broad outline of the Run, which Committee I anticipate will be sitting in about fourteen days' time. I will subsequently pass on to you some further information.

I would add that a number of entries have already been received, including, of course, some of the Austin Company's old cars, two or three of my own Veteran cars and other entries from members of the V.C.C. as well as from outside sources. In all cases these entries are being acknowledged and the entrants are being advised that they will be informed in due course as to the details of the Run, and whether their cars and entries will therefore be eligible.

I am,

Yours truly,

JAMES ALLDAY.

Although our first impression was one of enthusiasm over an event offering such great possibilities for fun and

adventure, all our more considered opinions were, and are, decidedly against the event. In the first place, does it seem quite appropriate to send comic cars through a country which our soldiers will need to police heavily for some considerable time after victory is won, and in which hundreds of thousands of gallant British lives have been lost, immediately the war is over? In our opinion it does not. Then, is it in the best interests of the veteran car, which in several countries before the war had just about established itself as a serious competition vehicle as distinct from a gymkhana "old crock," to launch it on a journey of especial difficulty, on which it is easy to visualise such cars incurring disgrace in a number of ways having little or no bearing on their actual efficiency as motor vehicles? It is noticeable that no mention is made as to whether the R.A.C. has been approached for promise of a permit and, if it has, what are the official views of its Competitions Committee. We have said repeatedly, and we say again now, that whatever an individual's or club's views of the R.A.C.'s control of the Sport may be, while the R.A.C. continues to exercise its power it is in everyone's interest that its jurisdiction be accepted and complied with. If the R.A.C. issues a permit for this ambitious, we might almost write *fantastic*, Veteran Victory Run, will it explain why it refused a permit for a harmless little run to Exeter and back for small cars of the early nineteen-twenties, which someone tried to put over some years ago? Finally, why should the Veteran Car Club, previously a body which confined itself strictly to events for cars built prior to 1905, suddenly seek to extend its hospitality to cars of up to 1910, formerly a preserve of the veteran section of the Vintage S.C.C.?

We have the warmest admiration for the past functions of the Veteran Car Club. We

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# RECALLING THE ROAD-TESTS

No. 2.—The 1926 period of MOTOR SPORT road-tests

THE year 1926 was a full and prolific time for those engaged in trying and commenting on fast cars for readers of this paper. We commenced with a "13/50" Th. Schneider in January, Capt. Twelvrees wearing leather coat and leather flying hat in order to combat the elements in this interesting boat-tailed 4-seater. The car had some 18,000 miles to its credit when taken over, but it nevertheless reached 72 m.p.h. from a standstill in 34.4 secs., and achieved 52 m.p.h. in third gear, equal to 3,600 r.p.m. It was taken over some choice colonial going and run fast up to Cambridge, where the Editor was delivering a lecture to the C.U.A.C., and it returned wholly favourable impressions. The four-wheel brakes were progressive and very smooth in action and pulled the car up in 66 yards from 60 m.p.h. without locking the wheels, and the quite striking bodywork, leather covered, with a rather contrasting aluminium bonnet and scuttle, provided ample room and protection. The hood was erectable in five minutes. An interesting feature was the absence of control levers on the steering-wheel boss, these being accommodated on the fascia, while a lever was provided by means of which extra oil could be fed to the valve gear. The instruments included rev.-counter and clock, and all were easily visible. In spite of the car's hard life, no measurable amount of oil vanished in 250 miles and fuel consumption was 28 m.p.g. The 12.9-h.p. 72×120-mm. engine had o.h. valves and pulled a top gear of 4.8 to 1. Third speed was 6.8 to 1, and the drive to the separate gearbox was through a leather cone clutch. Then, as now, we were critical, disliking the increased attention called for by the steering at 60 m.p.h. and a tendency for top gear to stick in at 55 m.p.h. The indirect ratios were somewhat harsh and over 40 m.p.h. the exhaust note became embarrassing, as a very young constable discovered outside Baldock. Hill climbing and suspension were liberally praised. This Th. Schneider cost £580 and would reach just about 75 m.p.h. Occasionally you see one still in service, though usually (or always?) the "16/60" model.

In the same issue we reported the London-Gloucester trial with a "Grand Sports" Salmson and made a sort of road-test of it. Frankly, first impressions were not too good. The steering was heavy at low speeds, the gear change tricky, the side-brake flimsy and the absence of differential noticeable, while the suspension was a trifle harsh. This, incidentally, was the 3-speed "Sammy," with uncowed radiator bearing the "X" symbol, Amilcar-like combined wings and running boards and a V screen. In the course of the trial it climbed Quarry Hill, Beacon Hill, Stancombe and Birdlip, the last-named in second gear, the left-hand bend being taken at 32 m.p.h. A speed of about 73 m.p.h. was reached on the road and no oiling-up or other plug trouble was experienced. The Salmson went quietly through Oxford in top gear, not drawing so much as a frown from the

point-duty policeman at Carfax, and it consumed less than a pint of water. The next day Leith Hill was successfully ascended in spite of appalling conditions, while from a standing start Pebblecombe was climbed at 33 m.p.h. in second gear.

Next on the list of cars to be tried was a Super Sports air-cooled A.B.C. 2-seater. This was the 11-h.p. 96.1×91.5-mm. 1,326-c.c. model, with light pistons and twin carburettors, which gave 40 b.h.p. at 3,500 r.p.m. The gearbox, with vertical gate (the writer uses one at the present time and finds it very good), gave four speeds, and in bottom 30 m.p.h. was reached, while 40 was attained in second, 50 in third and a good 65 in top gear; 0-55 m.p.h. occupied only 14.2 secs. The car was not particularly silent, but it had excellent sporting lines, being the pointed-tail job with flowing wings and V screen, and the rapid gear-change was well praised. Just for a change a lady driver featured in two of the three pictures published, which may or may not have been why the major portion of the test comprised catalogue technicalities.

An A.C. Six aluminium "Montlhéry" 2-seater was tried next, with engine like the modern A.C. and the gearbox integral with the rear axle. After 11 months of demonstration work the car tried had 22,856 miles to its credit. Smooth tyres resulted in some pretty skids in town, but the A.C. was found to be really controllable. It was also docile, smooth and quiet, with an excellent top gear performance. Second gear was noisy, the clutch did not release instantaneously after a rapid change and the gear-lever asked rather a long movement. Otherwise this A.C. went well, although the four-wheel brakes, while being smooth, were out of adjustment. Box Hill Zig-Zag was made as a timed climb from the main road to the stone parapet at the top. The first bend was entered at over 40 m.p.h. and taken in first gear. A change up was made at 30 m.p.h. and the second and third hairpins were taken in as for the first, the total time being 3 mins. 30.4 secs. This was later reduced to 3 mins. 28 secs.; 0-40 m.p.h. took 14 secs. in first gear and 0-50 m.p.h. through the gears 15 secs., while 65 m.p.h. was reached in 18.6 secs. Pebblecombe was ascended at 30 m.p.h., finishing in first, and the A.C. made light of Leith Hill and rode remarkably well over the heath down to Coldharbour. The maximum seemed to be a little over 75 m.p.h.; Brooklands was not yet open. Actually, a certificate for 85 m.p.h. was issued with these cars, if desired. A long main road run served to emphasise the tireless control, light steering and the flexibility of the six-cylinder engine. This 2-litre unit gave 66 b.h.p. and the chassis weight was little more than 9 cwt. The gear ratios were 11.7, 6.3 and 4.0 to 1. Are any sports A.C. Sixes of this type running now? In the same issue we reported a week-end road-test of the "Brooklands" Austin Seven, but the most technical description only was published.

Another trial in the Salmson followed; this time the "Colmore Cup," using the same car as before. It proved a brute to start, even after Rex Mundy had dived into his Riley and produced from it a set of new K.L.G. J1's. This was to prove the Salmson's undoing in the trial, although it got up such acclivities as Bucklands (at 4,500 r.p.m. in bottom), Gypsy Lane, Stanway and Gambles Lane nicely, in spite of severe spin, and made light of the Bushcombe stop-and-restart. Security bolts were used this time, whereas in the "Gloucester" they were badly missed.

Happy, happy times! Oh, and a weighbridge had to be visited, where the Salmson tipped the beam at 14 cwt. 2 qr. 7 lb., minus 24 stone 9 lb. for the occupants.

Another small French sports car was sampled next, in the form of a Type T.S.3 3-seater Senechal, which went along to the Victory Cup trial. For a preliminary canter it was taken to Leith Hill and the Box Hill Zig-Zag. A mysterious fuel starvation upset things at first and a tyre punctured, but at last, with full tank, Leith Hill was stormed successfully, three up, and a fine photograph secured after another run embracing a restart on the worst section—this artistic study graced the agent's advertisement in the same issue. The "colonial" going from Leith to Coldharbour was taken satisfactorily, and although the engine was not run-in and had phosphor-bronze big-ends, 0-50 m.p.h. was attained in a matter of 21 secs. The maximum was kept down to rather more than 67 m.p.h. Still, with a crew of three, the Senechal took Pebblecombe at over 30 m.p.h., although petrol starvation came in again as the summit was reached. The suspension, body construction, steering, clutch and gear-change were all highly praised. The four-wheel brakes were excellent, but the transmission handbrake was more suited to emergency than to regular use. The four-cylinder 59×100-mm. (1,094-c.c.) engine had a unit gearbox with ratios of 4.5, 8 and 13 to 1, and a cone clutch was used. The wheelbase was 8' 2", track 3' 6" and suspension was by transverse front spring and double quarter elliptics to the solid rear axle. Once again it was notable that the French made fast small cars that looked fast, the general body lines following those of the Salmson and Amilcar. The price was £255, or £15 less without front brakes—it is only 1926, remember!

After this, the "Grand Sport" Amilcar just had to be tested, which was done in the May issue, after covering the Surbiton Grand Cup trial in one. It was the sort with one-piece D-section flowing wings and running boards and straight-sided radiator cowl, and because it was spring the Editor now drove it in overcoat and cap. Trials were trials in those days and there was a whole lot of slime. The Amilcar wore chains with its differential-less axle and went very well. Indeed, it was only once badly troubled with spin and it was one of only two cars to get up Slippery Sam. It came to rest on its

## RECALLING THE ROAD-TESTS—continued

sump at Leith, but this was an unobserved acclivity, presumably put in to tire, or break, things. The Goat Track, Ranmore, Netley and Lovers' Lane were accounted for successfully and hectic work remedied a jammed starter and loose wheel-chains before they could spoil an excellent record. No general impressions were quoted, but a caption to an excellent photograph (where the background looks like Croydon Aerodrome from the Bypass) suggests a maximum of 75 m.p.h.

A Gordon England Austin Seven "Cup" 2-seater was taken through the M.C.C. Lands End trial, but this was hardly a road-test report, although the 64-m.p.g. fuel consumption achieved between Slough and Taunton on the road section makes one's mouth water. Before the Roost the fulcrum pin of the brake pedal came adrift from the steering column and locked the brakes partially on, but the other hills were climbed clean.

Two months went by without a test-report appearing, and then the Assistant Editor wrote-up a six-cylinder O.M. for the August issue. Apparently it was necessary to visit Brooklands to buy some "potted speed" for a personal motor, and there was practice for the J.C.C. Production Car Race to watch, so Weybridge was the objective. In traffic this 2-litre Italian car was very pleasant, a rapid gear-change and good pick-up at low speeds being combined with slightly heavy but very smooth braking. The brakes had a distinctive note, by reason of unlined cast-iron shoes in the back drums, the front shoes alone bearing Mr. Ferodo. Third gear had a very slight hum. Commencing in this ratio at 25 m.p.h. Putney Hill was breasted at 42 m.p.h.; 55 was later reached in this ratio, and still a quick upward change could be made. Springing was slightly harsh at low speeds and a shade flexible at high speeds, being best at 40-60 m.p.h. This gave rise to an expressed desire for driver-controlled damping, nowadays so admirably provided by Messrs. Bentley, Rolls-Royce and Lagonda. The O.M. rolled a little when cornering, as it was shod with medium-pressure balloon tyres. At Brooklands the first lap was done at 65-66 m.p.h., holding 68 down the Railway Straight, and on the second lap the speed was worked up to 72 m.p.h. Major Oates happened to be trying out his 1½-litre O.M. for the Production Car Race, and it held 72 m.p.h. for the lap and 75 m.p.h. after a carburation improvement. The touring six-cylinder s.v. O.M., as tested, sold at £695.

No less a car than a 1½-litre Grand Prix Type 37 Bugatti was tested next, exercised for us by Capt. J. C. Douglas. It is significant of the period that it was *sans* wings, with an aero screen for the passenger only, yet was taxed for the road. This was the unsupercharged four-cylinder 69×100 mm. (1,496-c.c.) job. It was the car used equally well by Mrs. Douglas for West End shopping excursions and her husband in winning the "Evening News" 100-Mile Handicap at the B.A.R.C. August Meeting, at 94.75 m.p.h. It proved quite a comfortable car, the clutch and gearbox discreetly concealed beneath a leather flap. Certainly the rear wheel came close to the passenger's elbow

and weather protection was slight. The Bugatti proved very tractable and smooth in traffic, did 85 m.p.h. on the open road and, of course, had admirable road-holding qualities. Succombe Hill was climbed easily in second gear (6.5 to 1) and three flat-out ascents in bottom gear (7.5 to 1) failed to overheat the engine. Top gear was 4.0 to 1; third, 5.0 to 1. Braking was extremely stable, even from 70 m.p.h.

The next car tested was one of the most imposing that MOTOR SPORT has ever tried—a 45-h.p. straight-eight Isotta-Fraschini 4-seater. John Bolster cares for one to this day. Performing in silence, the Isotta nevertheless cruised at 55 m.p.h. and easily went up to 86½ m.p.h. Fortunately, it also pulled up from 80 m.p.h. in 62 yards, with very light pedal pressure. The three-speed gearbox had well-chosen ratios and gave a very easy change. So far as acceleration is concerned, 0-80 m.p.h. took 25¼ secs., 0-35 m.p.h. in first gear, 7.0 secs., and 35-85 m.p.h. in top gear, 17.8 secs. Compare with figures for the moderns! The two-bearing 7-litre o.h.v. engine would pull down to 9 m.p.h. and had no vibration periods. Steering and hill-climbing were praised highly.

About this time an aluminium-bodied Anzani Frazer-Nash was put through its paces. The rapidity of de-dogging and re-dogging as against normal ratio-shifting was emphasised, and with it the use of a high top gear; the ratios were 3.8, 5.4 and 11.6 to 1. Fuel consumption was given as 38-40 m.p.g.

An unusual car was tried next, in the form of a Windsor "Special." It had a clean-looking four-cylinder, two-bearing push-rod o.h.v. engine, of 65×102 mm. (1,350 c.c.), said to give 30 b.h.p., although rated at 10.4. Lubrication was by plunger-pump to splash troughs, and there were separate water passages between head and block. A single-plate clutch took the drive to a four-speed gearbox, with ratios of 17.7, 10.4, 7.5 and 4.44 to 1. The four-wheel brakes pulled the car up in 25 yards from 45 m.p.h.; 10-30 m.p.h. occupied 6.8 secs. in second, 9.0 secs. in third and 18.0 secs. in top gear. The engine pulled down to 6 m.p.h. and the Windsor could do 60 m.p.h. without becoming forced, as it felt at any higher pace. Suspension was judged to be particularly good by the standards prevailing at that time, and handling, gear-changing included, likewise. The Goat Track was ascended rapidly in first gear and without overheating, and at Box Hill Zig-Zag the first bend was taken in second, first put in quickly, whereupon second could soon be regained and the second bend taken at well over 23 m.p.h., the car accelerating to 38 m.p.h. before being braked for the severe corner near the summit. The car tested was the boat-tailed 2-3-seater, priced at £345, with wire wheels, V-screen and semi-flaired wings. The Windsor has not entirely disappeared from the road, incidentally.

The year concluded with another test of a "Grand Sports" Salmson, this time with cycle-type wings and cowled radiator. Pouring rain did its best to mar the run, but the photographer's Morgan was soon outpaced, the improved steering and less noticeable effect of the solid axle being appreciated. Except over bad going, the

suspension, too, was better and the new mudguards decidedly so. Gear-changing called for brutal movements of the lever unless slow swops were tolerated, but it was pointed out that the racing-car boxes had needed no renewals in three seasons! The ratios were 13.5, 7.5, 4.5 and 3.75 to 1. The speed in first was 30 m.p.h. and over 4,500 r.p.m. was purposely held for at least a quarter of a mile without ill effect; 49 m.p.h. was attained in second and 65 in third gear. The speedometer registered in kilos., but the timed maximum, under unfavourable conditions, was 84.12 m.p.h. over half a mile—the Tellums of this world, please note! An efficient twin o.h.c. engine and real streamlining doubtless had much to do with such excellent speed abilities from 1,100 c.c. fifteen summers ago. The braking and road-holding were fully in keeping, and the construction appeared to be very sturdy, in spite of an unladen weight in the region of 10 cwt. Succombe was climbed in 60 secs., using first and second, the speed before the hairpin rising to 48 m.p.h. on the latter ratio.

One other car was tested in 1926 and that was the funny little £99 Nomad (or Gnome), which had a rear-placed 350-c.c. Villiers 2-stroke engine, friction-drive, one-piece body and chassis, and Dunlop 27"×4.5" balloon tyres in lieu of springs. It used to eat its cooling fan and get indigestion. We took the test car over a trials course, did the 20 miles from Tunnel Slide to Dunstable in rain and black-out (pardon, darkness!) at a 30-m.p.h. average, climbed the afore-named hill several times with a 12-stone passenger, did 45 m.p.h., and liked the brakes, the direct, non-castoring steering and the four-speed gate, which could be made to give any desired ratio by finding intermediate locations for the lever. We only criticised the horrible noise of the Bendix drive and the proximity of the brake lever to the side of the body; on which note we will close.

This interesting series of cars was loaned by the following concerns (we quote registration numbers where possible, as it may interest someone to find that they own, or have owned, a vintage demonstration model):—Th. Schneider, Welbeck Agency (XX 5415); Salmson, Armand Bouvier (YM 7842); A.B.C., Ward & Co. (PD 4887); A.C., A.C. Cars (PE 1844); Senechal, Automobile Service Co. (YM 8009); Amilcar, Boon & Porter (PE 4667); Austin Seven, Austin Motor Co., Ltd. (YM 7374); O.M., L. C. Rawlence & Co. (—); Bugatti, Capt. Douglas (YM 2838); Isotta-Fraschini, Isotta-Fraschini (Gt. Britain) Ltd. (QQ5159); Frazer-Nash, A.F.N., Ltd. (PE 5955); Windsor, James Bartle & Co., Ltd. (YN 1201); Salmson, George Newman, Ltd. (YP 5057); and Nomad, Nomad Cars, Ltd. (trade plates).

Happy days! Small sports cars which would perform quite well if you handled them aright, some very good bigger ones, heaps of the right sort of enthusiasm at the countless trials and down at the track. . . . 96-m.p.h. Midgets had not been invented, leather coats were universal, the police caught you for noise, chains were worn in trials, veteran cars were used regularly without causing comment.

## SCUDERIA STATHAM

[The Scuderia idea is likely to appeal particularly to younger readers who cannot achieve much when working on their own. So we have pleasure in including a description, by J. Heywood Statham, of a "Scuderia" he and his friends operated.—Ed.]

**M**Y brother and I were both fortunate in having our zest for speed and fast motor cars in some measure satisfied at an early age. My father owned, many years before my brother and I were old enough to hold driving-licences, such cars as Alfa-Romeo, "30/98" Vauxhall, Talbot and Sunbeam, so it must be admitted that we were brought up in the right atmosphere from a motoring point of view.

The first recollection I have of motoring sport is a visit to Brooklands in the year 1925, when the high spot of the meeting was the driving by Parry Thomas at the wheel of the ill-fated Thomas "Babs." I have attended many meetings since then, but I have never seen a more awe-inspiring spectacle than that great white car rushing along the top of the members' banking, passing car after car with the off-side wheels not more than an inch or so from the edge of the Track. That day also stands out in my mind as I recall that, on driving away from the Track, my father was involved in a "dice" with Major C. G. Coe, whom he knew and who was also driving a "30/98" Vauxhall. Although we held him until somewhere near the Staines Reservoir, he managed, by greater speed and driving, to leave us, but then very sportingly pulled up some miles ahead to congratulate my father on the great effort he had made. It was with great regret that we witnessed, a short time later, his terrific crash when driving at another meeting at Brooklands. Many readers will probably remember the incident more clearly than I do myself, as I was, I think, only about 11 years old at the time, but from what I remember Major Coe was travelling very fast down the Railway Straight in close company with a red Fiat, when, to the amazed spectators on the Members' Hill, the car seemed to leap high into the air, turning over and over before it finally came to rest. That both the driver and mechanic could escape—as they did—with only slight injuries seemed incredible. I have since seen this crash described as one of the most sensational in motor-racing, and to a speed-mad boy of 11 years of age it was certainly a sight never to be forgotten.

Exciting cars and journeys with my father at the wheel took place in the years after those early Brooklands days. My brother and I experienced our first 100 m.p.h. crammed in the tool compartment of the tail of a blown Alfa-Romeo, which my father ran for a time. My mother was asleep in the passenger's seat, which speaks volumes for the fine road-holding of these early Alfas. It was only the fact that my brother, who was then of tender years, was unable to get his breath and was nearly suffocating at that speed, that prevented even greater efforts. What my mother might have said and felt had she awakened at that moment may have been the reason we slowed to a more normal road speed after passing the three figure mark!

Despite many fast runs we had in Alfa-Romeos, no car before or since has

given the same pleasure that the "30/98" Vauxhall (registration No. EO 9) gave us for many years. This car for some reason, despite the fact that it had a polished aluminium body with red wings, I always considered at that time a touring car (how unappreciative are the young!), and it took us all over the British Isles for many years without the slightest trouble. I do not remember her being able to exceed 70 m.p.h. by very much, even when she was pressed, but this may be because of the heavy cargo she always carried, made up of both personnel and luggage. My father did once drive solo from Harrow to Mansfield (a distance of 149 miles) in ten minutes under the three hours, so what speed the car could reach she must have been able to hold. The brakes were the most worrying feature, as on most cars of that marque, while on that particular model starting from cold in the winter often necessitated cooking the plugs on the gas stove and also the dangerous practice of swinging the car and pressing the self-starter at the same time. If any reader has come across her at any time I should be glad to hear of her condition, and any information that he may have available.

When at last the day came for me to try my own hand at the wheel of a car the fates deemed that the car should be none other than a Calcott, a few examples of which were still seen on the roads up to the outbreak of the present war. [We went in search of one only last month.—Ed.] The machine in question had no front brakes and "hair's-breadth" steering—this latter fact did not, however, prevent me from all but demolishing a large shed in the yard where my first driving lesson took place. Being eventually considered safe to handle a car, I made every effort to drive any that I could persuade the rather anxious owner to loan me. After the Calcott I had some epic drives in a Cubitt—a monument of a car, with pressed-steel wheels and an exhaust not unlike a Hoover, but great fun. A Bean was another car on which I had several enjoyable runs at this time, so my early motoring had a definite vintage flavour!

At last my father, worried by the constant entreaties of my brother and myself, brought home the inevitable bull-nosed 11.9 Morris Cowley, with Hotchkiss engine. He presented us with the car (I think he had paid 50/- for it) with the remark that we could do "damn well what we liked with it"—a proviso which opened up all sorts of interesting ideas on conversion, etc. We had already had some experience with a similar model, as a friend had a 4-seater example on which we had tried our hands at a little "tuning." The said "tuning" had consisted of lapping the head to the block until it was possible to pick up the latter by lifting the head alone (without the valve grinding paste wiped off!—critics). The head was put back, using Seccotine in the position that one usually finds a gasket, and then the engine run without any water in the radiator on pure benzol.

The life was, as can be imagined, short, but not so much from engine failure as because, on the first run, the enthusiast at the wheel was so amazed that he could reach 45 m.p.h. in such a short space of time that he tried to do "a Brauchitsch" round the curves by the Elstree Reservoir and at once overturned into the ditch, luckily with no injury to himself. The car was well and truly written off, a breaker giving 2/6 for the remains.

It was decided that the best method of conversion for the newly-acquired Morris would be, as all amateur car builders at first imagine, to whip the body off, lower the steering, make a new body with a tank on the back with a real big filler cap—and boy! you've got a real sports job. I won't enlarge on the unhappy results that emerged from this first sad effort, but we had learnt much by the time it was possible to make the car run again under its own power. We had come to know intimately the judder of a breast-drill in the stomach; that people don't like the noise of sheet metal beating at 10 o'clock in the morning; that if you lower a radiator you'll never swing a car on the handle again (but, old chap, you can always use the starter—like fun you can!); that petrol won't run uphill, and that air can go out as well as in to a pressure-fed tank; items that enthusiasts and "special" builders know all too well. The finished article looked horrible. In order to get the car as low as possible, besides flattening the springs and underslinging the frame, we had lowered the scuttle to the same level as the radiator, with the result that one got the optical illusion that the radiator was higher than the scuttle.

The outcome of this first attempt was that when we weighed up all the points in its favour against the disadvantages we found the only thing we had gained towards owning a "sporting motor-car" was experience. It was therefore decided to see if it was possible to acquire a car on which most of the conversion work had been carried out and try to turn it into a more serviceable road car, in which it might be possible to attend sporting events at some distance from our home, with a chance of returning again the same week. Searching in various mews and garages, an Austin was unearthed on the premises of G. S. Griffiths. It had been very well lowered and fitted with quite a respectable body. This we bought, giving the Morris in part exchange. This Austin was a great little car, but needed plenty of attention, so we decided to rebuild her completely. After the chassis had been reassembled and painted, and worn parts renewed, it was decided, although against all forms of better judgment and conscience, to strip the engine and really try to obtain some power from it, even if it meant sacrificing reliability. The block was rebored and tubular connecting rods and light-alloy pistons were obtained. The connecting rods we had machined down round the outside of the big ends, managing to get a total of six ounces off

## SCUDERIA STATHAM—continued

the four. Hours were spent polishing the connecting rods and inside of the crankcase. We had the head machined and then lapped it on to the block, this latter part of the engine being placed on the dressing-table in my bedroom, where it became the rule to spend whatever spare time we had swinging it with an eternal figure-of-eight motion. The head was then copperized and more lapping took place. The flywheel we had machined down as far as was possible while still retaining the clutch, and, with grim determination, it was decided to sacrifice the last hope of ever having a self-starter by having all the teeth machined off the starter ring. The ports were polished and the tops filed off the valve guides, new double valve springs fitted, and all the more normal methods of tuning carried out. We then felt we had strained a standard Austin Seven engine to its limit if we were to get any mileage from the machine at all. Finally, she was ready for the road, painted cream and looking most impressive. By now we were more or less *au fait* with what is done and what is not done by the true enthusiast to his car, but we had permitted ourselves a little "artists' licence" by beating and fitting a head cowl. Eventually, one Sunday morning, a group of cheerful enthusiasts pushed against a 10 to 1 compression-ratio for their dear lives in order to start the engine. There had never been any hope of swinging the car because, as usual, the former owner had the radiator so lowered that it was impossible to get anywhere near the end of the crankshaft with such an implement as a starting handle. Amazingly enough, the car went at once with a roar that shook the surrounding countryside. We had fitted a large Derrington silencer and a 2" copper exhaust-pipe, but this equipment seemed to increase the note more than silence the engine. After some adjustment to the timing, I engaged bottom, let out the clutch, let it in and—both half shafts broke. New half shafts were soon obtained, but it was necessary to take the whole back axle down to fit them, as a broken end could not be removed. After this the engine refused to start, and it dawned on us that the crown wheel and pinion had been mated the wrong way round. This was easily proved, as when reverse gear was engaged and the car given a slight push forward the engine ran happily; we had evolved the prototype of the modern Italian tank, as we had one very low forward speed and three in reverse!

When all these troubles had been overcome, however, we found we had an extremely fast little Austin, considering so much of it was standard. The maximum speed was 72 m.p.h., timed over a mile on the Aylesbury to Bicester road, but this could only be held for a few minutes as overheating then became a serious factor. A steady 60 m.p.h. could be held for long periods, however, without the engine suffering unduly, which was surprising considering all the unkind things that had been done to it.

We had many miles of extremely enjoyable motoring in that car, visiting Brooklands, Donington, Shelsley-Walsh, Dancer's End and many other venues,

without serious trouble. After a while, however, we began to tire of pushing in order to start; this was very trying in heavy traffic such as round Trafalgar Square and in Oxford Street, if we were unlucky enough to stall the engine. We had also more or less exhausted the supply of half-shafts from breakers' yards within a considerable radius of our home, while night driving with only torches fastened with handkerchiefs to the wings was not an experience to be indulged in as a regular pastime. Finally, after a slight disagreement with the local police over exhaust note and brakes, we sold the car to a local "doodle bug" driver, who converted her into a very successful midget-car before the existing formula for such machines was introduced.

About this time the half-mile track was opened at Greenford by Spike Rhiando, and after several visits it was decided to start building a car with which we could compete in some of the events held at this "dirt bowl." However, before our plans had progressed very far, racing finished at that track, never to be resumed. Many readers will no doubt remember the hectic events and many interesting cars which ran in some of the events held there. The star performers to my mind were Mazengarb (Lea Francis) and Lear (G.N.). How these two drivers ever survived the hectic smashes in which they were involved I shall never understand. Through the safety fence, into the ditch, back on to the track again—all seemed to be in the afternoon's sport.

Although our plans had not progressed far in regard to producing a "Special," we decided to form a "Scuderia" with other enthusiastic friends, who were either the owners of cars or in the throes of "Special"-building. These friends could be divided into two schools: the three-wheeler adherents and those favouring Austin conversions. In the first group there was Ronnie Wise, who had two Morgans: an old-type "Aero" sports with an air-cooled J.A.P. engine, and a fairly late "Family" model in which was fitted a J.A.P. twin which had been removed from a 1935 Aero Morgan. This engine and chassis combined gave him a very fast motor with plenty of accommodation. Douglas Pratt and Ian Hamilton, besides owning an Aero Sports Morgan, were then building a most terrifying three-wheeler. This machine had a G.N. front axle and a tubular frame, with the rear end of a Morgan connected to it. The engine, a single-cylinder 500-c.c. Rudge, was placed behind the driver in order to get more weight over the rear wheel. This was especially necessary, as the machine was only a single-seater and therefore it would not be possible to carry a passenger who could throw his weight about in the car in the approved manner in order to obtain wheel adhesion at the start of sprint events. It was a pity that this car never reached a starting line, as it was in many respects the answer to Kenneth Neve's question: "Why not Class I?" The weight was less than that of most motor-cycle combinations and much easier to handle. Cooling the engine was a problem, and the task of providing sufficient braking on the rear wheel was never really

solved. Ian Hamilton, however, after the machine had undergone its first tests, returned to his old love—motor-cycles—and therefore sold the "Special"; I have never heard of it since. The Austin adherents who formed the other half of the "Scuderia" consisted of Jim Stiff, who, besides the sprint Austin he was constructing, owned a Fiat "500"; "Puggy" Venning, who owned a "Chummy" Austin Seven and a Scott motor-cycle (on which he had lavished many hours tuning and polishing).

My brother and I completed the "Scuderia." We then owned a Gordon England Austin Seven, which we were using as hack car, its chief duty being to fetch parts from breakers' yards, etc., for the "Special" we were building for sprint events. I will not go into lengthy constructional details of this latter car, as it comes outside the scope of this article. It was the machine, however, which we later entered and ran at Dancer's End and Markyate speed trials under the name Statham-Austin-Special. The "Scuderia" made some most enjoyable trips with "Specials" in tow to speed events. Pratt's Morgan was extremely flexible and a great tribute to its designers. Although ten years old, it would tow the "Special" the distance from Harrow to Dancer's End, then without any alteration except the removal of lamps make fastest time of its class. The journey back home completed, it would be ready for the usual daily runs to its owner's office in the City.

The next car my brother and I purchased was an M.G. Magna, fitted with an extremely pleasing non-standard 2-seater body. I have never been able to find out the actual series of this car, although I have seen two others on the road at various times. The chassis was normal except that it was fitted with low-pressure tyres and the engine sported a Scintilla "Vertex" magneto. The tail of the car contained a cunningly concealed rumble seat which was designed to take one person, but which on more than one occasion seated two when a friend was hard put to find a lift to Donington or Shelsley. Third gear performance was interesting, but the car always seemed undergeared on top, as a speedometer reading of between 74-76 was about the best that could be produced. The six-cylinder engine ran very sweetly and never gave any trouble except that it was inclined to overheat in traffic and on long hills. Although the road-holding was characteristically M.G., the low-pressure tyres made the steering very heavy, with the most vicious back-lash imaginable. This made it rather a tiring car to drive on long runs, but it was otherwise a very useful and pleasing car. On one occasion my brother made two stately runs up Dancer's End in around 39 secs., when we were unable to prepare any other car in time for the event.

The next addition to the "Scuderia" was a "Grand Sports" Amilcar, with which Pratt replaced his Morgan. This car came in for plenty of attention, finally being rebuilt completely. A great deal of time was spent in polishing the brake drums, springs, etc., which, although it

## SCUDERIA STATHAM—continued

did not improve the performance, added greatly to the car's appearance. This may have encouraged the dealer to whom it was eventually sold to advertise the car as "formerly owned by a genuine enthusiast," which was some slight reward for the hours of hard work! I, personally, have always been surprised at the criticisms I have seen levelled at these cars in various motoring journals. This particular example was a beautiful little car to handle. Not fast by modern standards, she could draw away from most cars of her size on twisting stretches of road where road-holding and steering were more important than speed.

While still running the M.G. Magna I heard of an Alta for sale, the owner of which I understood might consider a deal in which the M.G. might be taken in part exchange. Investigation showed that the car was one of the early 9-h.p. Altas—No. 16 to be exact. It was not in very good condition, but we were not particularly concerned in that respect as, after all, an Alta is an Alta.

The car, however, proved to be something of a disappointment, as we found it had been through the hands of some really duff mechanics in its time, and had also been rather badly caned. The vertical driving shafts and skew gear to the twin overhead camshafts were badly worn and the whole engine seemed to have more oil on the outside of the crankcase than could ever be kept inside it. Undaunted, and encouraged by advice from the Alta Company, we managed to get new gears machined and to cure many of the other troubles which we kept discovering. Our main difficulty was that

attempts had been made at various times to screw up nuts so tightly in order to prevent oil leaks that most of the studs had been pulled right out of the alloy castings, only to be replaced with sizes large enough to have held together the Sydney Bridge.

While the Alta was receiving attention, Pratt sold the Amilcar and bought a very well-preserved "Brooklands" Riley Nine, which, as usual, he soon had in perfect running order and which he used every day for business. Victor Gillow had been a former owner of this particular car, and whoever had had it since then was far more conscientious than the former owners of the Alta. Right up to the outbreak of war the only trouble Pratt had with the car was a broken valve stem, which was easily replaced. This despite the fact that the car was, naturally, several years old and was used every day, and for several trips a week between London and Portsmouth.

As with most other enthusiasts, our motoring activities were curtailed when the present hostilities commenced. The Alta was reassembled, my brother taking it with him to camp on returning from his first leave. Pratt laid up the Riley; the other members of the "Scuderia" doing likewise with their respective cars when they joined the Forces.

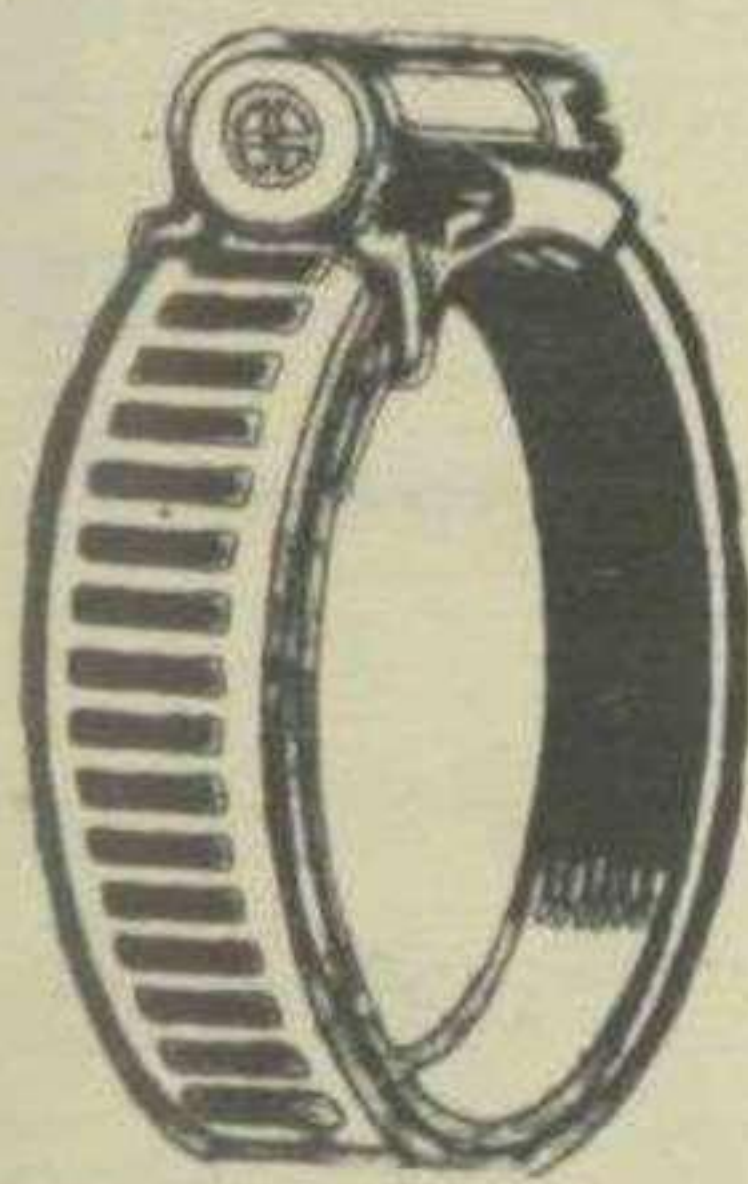
Despite the war, however, it has been found possible to pursue our motoring activities in some small measure. My brother was fortunate in finding other enthusiasts in his unit and they were able to obtain a barn near their camp in which it was possible to keep and work on their cars.

Some short while ago, after finding the Alta rather a responsibility, as it still required a great deal of attention to get it running properly, my brother sold the car to Jesty, late Secretary of the Cambridge Automobile Club, taking his Austin "Special" in part exchange. Jesty is still running the Alta, appearing with it at the Chessington Rally. My brother also bought an "Ulster" Austin Seven, the engine of which required considerable attention. As he had not the facilities available for rebuilding this engine, he put the engine from the ex-Jesty Austin into the "Ulster," so providing himself with a very serviceable little car. The rest of the "Scuderia" are now overseas, but I am still motoring myself, using an Austin Big Seven, which I find an ideal car for the job I am now performing. It gets me to and from some of the most inaccessible parts of the country without any trouble, often loaded down with great weights of a "hush-hush" nature. I have also bought a J2-Type M.G. Midget, which I am rebuilding and attempting to restore to its original condition. For this work I miss my home garage, for though its tools and equipment are not elaborate, it is surprising the various parts and materials that collect over a period of years when "messing about" with cars.

In conclusion, I may say that *MOTOR SPORT* is still read (from the date on the cover to the information that Gordon & Gotch are its agents in Australasia on the last page) by all enthusiasts of my acquaintance wherever present conditions find them. May I say, on behalf of them all, "Thanks for carrying on."

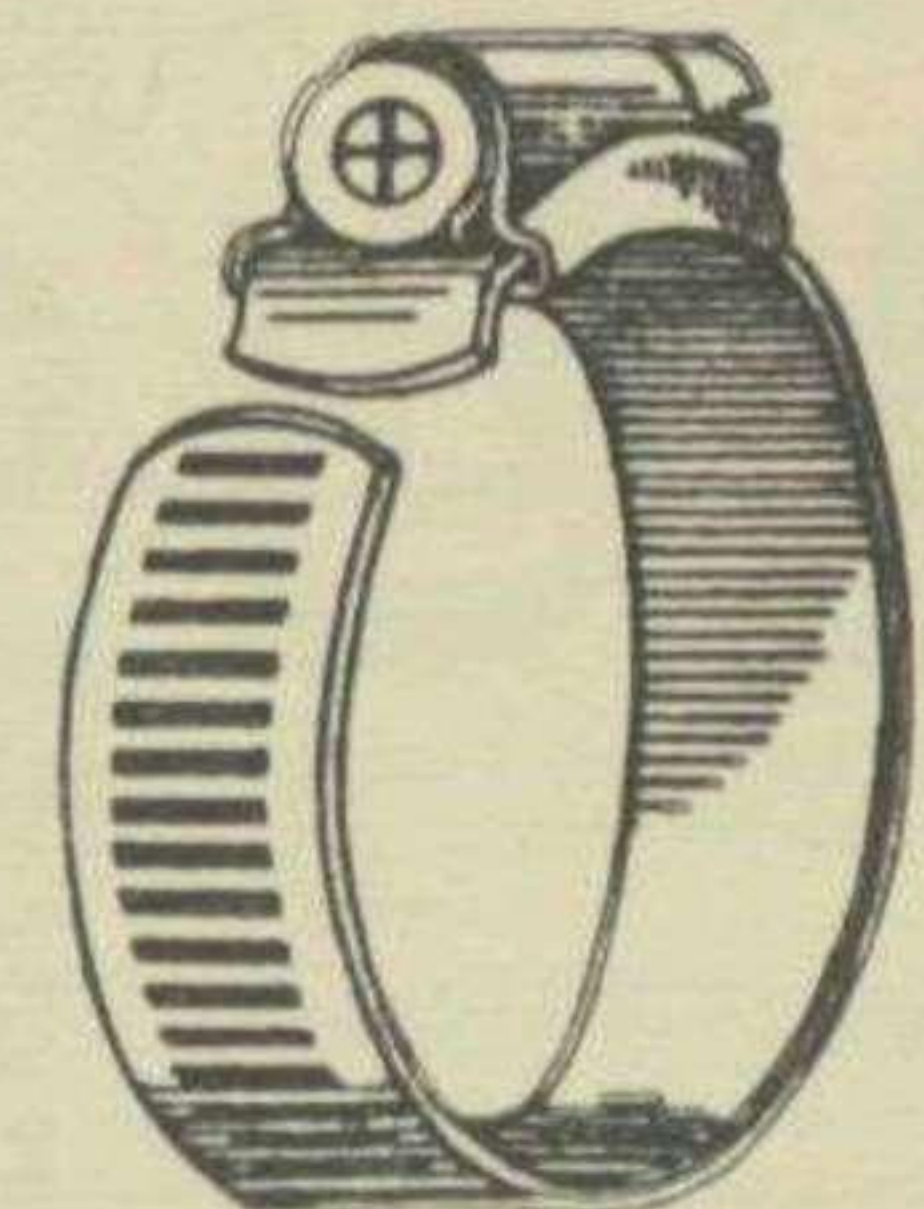
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## ON THE SPORT, THE FUTURE, AND THE FAIR SEX

**H**AS it ever struck you as curious that, while all the better motor-race meetings always draw a record number of lovely ladies, yet it is invariably the fair sex who is responsible for those sober saloon cars you see running about with the badges of the best sporting car clubs on their grilles? It is a generally accepted fact that the enthusiast fits a screen, hood, maybe even side-screens, to his car because some irresistible somebody requests that it shall be so. From there it is but a short step to buying a vehicle with a button to press when it is required to commence and windows to wind up when the elements are unkind. Possibly, if the English spring were less uncertain there would be more real sports cars on our highways and byways. . . . Lots of reasons may be advanced why woman does not take very kindly to sports-car motoring and wants to dress up in a white bathing hat when she does venture out in such cars. The real answer is probably simply that when it rains you get far wetter and more miserable in a screenless, hoodless car than you do in the theatre, cinema or dance hall, or at home by the fire—or even playing golf or intermittent tennis, or walking, for that matter. And very few of the older cars, even if they are not stripped for action, retain much of the weather-defying equipment provided originally by their thoughtful makers. I will not go so far as a recent correspondent to a contemporary, who, I

believe in reply to a letter from the now notorious "Sedan Fairy," suggested that women probably complained bitterly of the lack of protection provided on the floating logs on which their menfolk were wont to propel themselves, and that women have since been responsible for all the retrograde features introduced into automobilism, such as synchro-mesh, trafficators, automatic chassis lubrication, low-g geared steering and the like. But I do think that it is easier to take Sybil to Brooklands on a borrowed lady's brooch in a saloon than it is to get her to ride week-end after week-end in, say, an Aero Morgan for which you can't afford safety glass. You may induce Theodora to make herself really chic for a ride to a fashionable watering-place in father's ancient Morris-Cowley in mid-summer, but never be able to persuade her on to a veteran for the 7.30 a.m. start of a "London-Brighton." It seems possible, however, that all that may soon be changed. The fact is, the A.T.S. is taking very large numbers of girls of all ages (and, incidentally, appearances) and is training them not only to drive, but to understand quite a lot about "why the wheels go round." They are in many cases girls who have had no previous driving experience of any sort, yet they start on large vehicles which do *not* have synchro-mesh boxes. Obviously, too, listening to lectures on mechanics must teach them much about a subject of which

previously they knew just nothing at all. And when a person understands a subject it is far easier to hold and develop that interest than it is if they know nothing. We who regard ordinary utility-car manipulation as just too simple for words are apt to forget that the whole business of motoring is very complex and, I submit, quite interesting to a woman if she understands what you are doing and discussing, and utterly boring if she does not. It now looks as though the A.T.S. is doing what the impatient male could not: explain the mechanics and manipulation of the motor-vehicle to the fair sex. Let this thought cheer some of my bachelor readers who have bought fast, stark cars in which to visit sporting venues when we have won this war and who have a seat to spare—if only because monocars are no longer marketed. . . . I have even seen these young ladies in uniform dicing behind aero-screens in an open cockpit, and I have heard girls who had never so much as held a steering wheel six months ago earnestly discussing double-declutching and the advantages of the plate over the cone-clutch. Brave new world! Incidentally, if this pricks at any vulnerable consciences, I believe there are plenty of volunteers still needed. Oh, and as some sort of excuse for this particular outpouring, in 1911 no less a journal than "The Autocar" published a love story—and it was a serial story at that!!



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## SOME FLYING BOOKS

[Although these are not motoring books we make no excuse for reviewing them, for everyone owes a deep debt of gratitude to the R.A.F. and wishes to learn all they can about our gallant pilots and our invincible aircraft.—Ed.]

*British Fighter Planes*, by C. G. GREY (Faber and Faber.) 5/-.

This is a really worthwhile five-shillings' worth; indeed, price apart, it is a book that should not be missed by anyone who is in the least interested in the subject. We have had flying novels, airmen's biographies, stories of the last war-in-the-air and of this, quite outnumbering the motoring classics. It has been left to C. G. Grey to write a book about modern aeroplanes as such—and not a text-book on how the things fly. The publishers deserve the warmest congratulations for getting it to us at such a time at a so reasonable price, and no less does Charles Grey, late editor of "The Aeroplane," deserve praise for his thoroughness. Here you have the early history of the fighting aeroplane, biographies of famous men and firms responsible for them, the pedigrees of all the present British R.A.F. fighters and their specifications set out as you would find them set out in "All the World's Aircraft." Moreover, the writing is typically Grey, from Chapter I to the Postscript. His views, which for so many years made "The Aeroplane" a completely individual paper, appear again in these pages, and he frequently resorts to typically "C.G.G." stories of, and methods of approach to, a subject of fresh interest, but in his old-time style. Even his most bitter critics must surely admit that the whole aspect of the book is highly entertaining and that it is altogether delightful reading. If they do not agree (probably because at one time or another "C.G.G." has stood too heavily on their sensitive toes), at least they must accept his latest writings as an excellent source of reference. A description of Bristol and Rolls-Royce engines and their pedigrees is given, to line up with like information covering the Bristol "Blenheim," Boulton-Paul "Defiant," Gloster "Gladiator," Hawker "Hurricane" and Supermarine "Spitfire" aeroplanes. The American

aeroplanes are listed and the pedigree of the Westland "Whirlwind" is there. There may be a few historical inaccuracies, but they are not easy to spot. W. O. Bentley unfortunately goes in as "O. E." Bentley, and he is said to be "now concerned with Rolls-Bentley cars," whereas at the outbreak of war he was rather more associated with the Lagonda. The output figures for the latest motors are in at least one instance a few hundred h.p. out. Against that, some very interesting incidental detail is intermingled with the historical facts. We like the author's reference to the French Grand Prix, contested by cars the names of which "make music to any old-time motorist," and entered by firms run by men who were "great sportsmen and great gentlemen." The frequent references to the Schneider Trophy contest emphasise how much our successful fighters owe to air racing. We only hope Mr. Grey will produce many more such books; a sister volume on the British bombers would seem to be his next task. The present volume runs to 200 pages, has 26 excellent illustrations (photographs and drawings) and is endowed with a detailed index. The price, we repeat, is 5/-.

\* \* \*

*War News Had Wings*, by A. H. NARRACOTT. (Frederick Muller.) 8/6.

This book is better towards the end than it is at the beginning. The author was over in France before the capitulation, as Air Correspondent to "The Times," and his book, like Charles Gardner's "A.A.S.F." (reviewed in the August issue), covers the work of the Advanced Air Striking Force of the R.A.F. before Dunkirk. Much of the information is identical with that in Gardner's book; indeed, some of the accounts tally so closely that one is rather at a loss to know whether to explain this sameness as a compliment to the accuracy

to which news reporters work or whether Narracott is merely paying Gardner a direct compliment. . . . However, even if you have read Gardner's work, you should read "War News Had Wings," if only for the excellent closing chapters, which give such a very graphic portrait of what the retreat and evacuation in France was like. For a long time Narracott relied on a very doubtful Renault as personal transport, although the R.A.F. Hotchkiss and a French "Metford," presumably the Matford, are also mentioned. Narracott got home by sheer luck, just when things looked very desperate, in an A.W. "Ensign." The value of road transport during the mass retreat before the advancing Nazi armies is well brought out in those great last chapters. Tommy Wisdom, incidentally, is shown to have been "doing his stuff" despite unsavoury conditions. It is surely very significant that these critical accounts of our failures in France should be published while the war is still in progress. Somehow these books show how confident we are of Victory and how ready to admit, and profit by, our early mistakes. One day they will be historic reading. This book has 224 pages, a neat index at the back, and is illustrated with 30 Air Ministry photographs.

\* \* \*

*The Battle of Britain—1940*, by J. M. SPAIGHT, C.B., C.B.E. (Geoffrey Bles.) 10/6.

Here is a beautifully produced book, well illustrated, and running to 231 pages, which is a comprehensive record of one of the most vital periods in our history. No one who is interested in history, warfare, adventure, mankind or machinery can afford not to have this volume on his or her library shelves. It is likely to become the standard reference work on that magnificent job which the R.A.F. did for us last year.

## INDEPENDENT SUSPENSION

[This happens to be a true story. It is, however, so fantastic that both the car and the owner had better remain anonymous. If you recognise them it is not our fault.—Ed.]

I WAS motoring home from business in my powerful Continental motor-car and had just swung into one of those back-street detours I always adopt to avoid one of East London's few remaining traffic jams. At this point one turns left under a railway arch, leaving the main road, with its inevitable tramlines not yet ripped up, and immediately turns right on to a minor road.

We turned left quite normally, but when I spun the wheel over for the right-hand turn the car sailed straight forward and subsided on the nearside kerb like an elephant doing a curtsy. Fortunately we were travelling slowly enough for this evolution to be performed without damage.

As I alighted to inspect, the ever-

present constabulary arrived and aptly said, "Cor!" I felt a similar emotion, for the front wheels were lying roughly 45 degrees out of the vertical, although still parallel to one another and apparently attached to the steering arrangements.

Inspection showed that the centre-bolt of the single transverse leaf spring had sheared, leaving the spring free to float sideways under the side-thrusts of cornering, thus robbing the wheels of all compulsion to stand upright.

By carefully reversing the car and then pushing sideways—assisted by the constabulary—on the radiator cap, we restored the front wheels to something approaching equilibrium, and it was found possible to drive home at a very modest speed. I need hardly say that the

steering was not particularly accurate.

My point is simply this. I have not measured the offending bolt, but roughly it is the metric equivalent of a normal  $\frac{1}{4}$ " mild steel type. Upon this single  $\frac{1}{4}$ " bolt hangs the whole affair. It is subjected to all the side thrusts developed, when cornering, by the front end of a car weighing nearly 2 tons; if it breaks, the entire suspension system collapses.

I think this should be borne in mind by those who think that any form of independent suspension or retractable front under-carriage is the panacea for every road-holding and front-end difficulty. I also wonder if a certain charming blonde Frenchman realised it when cornering as he did in a certain sports-formula race late in 1938. . . .

# ROLLS-ROYCE CONTINENTAL TESTING

[W. A. Robotham, who is in charge of the Experimental Department of Rolls-Royce, Ltd., describes the very thorough tests which have helped to ensure Rolls-Royce and Rolls-Bentley perfection and some amusing incidents associated therewith.—Ed.]

**S**ELLING motor-cars from £1,500 upwards may be a very satisfactory procedure from the sales department's point of view, but it undoubtedly throws severe obligations on the engineering department. The customer—somewhat naturally—expects to have complete reliability and almost infinite durability from such an expensive product. A story is told (which I believe can be substantiated by facts) of a Rolls-Royce customer who, during a motoring holiday with his family, experienced a broken valve spring. He immediately put up at the best hotel within reach, telephoned to Derby, and awaited the arrival of a mechanic with the replacement spring. The company was afterwards asked to settle the hotel bill, whilst, of course, the mechanic's services and travelling expenses were supplied gratis. In contradistinction to this somewhat autocratic attitude, the owner of the more moderately priced popular car might be expected to call at the nearest garage for a replacement spring. I once asked the managing director of a firm making "popular" cars if he had any service valve spring trouble, but he knew of none nor did his service manager. Further investigation, however, revealed that the storekeeper disposed of thousands of valve springs annually to the company's retailers.

The problem of satisfying the purchaser of an expensive motor-car is bad enough when the vehicle lays no particular claim to have an outstanding performance, but it becomes worse when the high-priced chassis is supposed to be in the "sports-car" class. The obvious reason for this is that if a car has any real performance it can, like a thoroughbred horse, be very easily abused. If, in addition, the car holds the road well, has effective brakes, an unobtrusive power plant and a gearbox that is quiet on the intermediate gears, it is the simplest thing in the world for the unmechanically minded and inexpert driver to do irreparable damage by unintentionally driving in third gear instead of top.

We rarely get any serious trouble from experts like Raymond Mays, E. R. Hall or Eyston, although they frequently use their touring Bentleys for practice under racing conditions, quite apart from getting the maximum from the vehicle under ordinary touring conditions.

From the foregoing it will be appreciated that no amount of experimental testing can ensure 100 per cent. satisfied owners, but it does seem that the somewhat strenuous schedule adopted by Rolls-Royce, and outlined hereafter, has enabled the Rolls-Bentley to satisfy quite a number of people.

Since the days when the "Silver Ghost" competed with success in the Alpine Trials in 1913, Rolls-Royce have favoured the Continent as a proving-ground for their products. It was not, however, until after the last war that we set up a permanent establishment in France from which to run continuous experimental tests. Sending a car over-

seas has one great advantage—it gets away from the factory and calls a halt to the process of fitting new and alleged "improved" pieces. Apart from this, for fast road-work, poor surfaces and mountaineering there is no comparison between the terrain of the British Isles and that of the Continent. It is necessary to supplement Continental testing with running under London traffic conditions, as this throws a peculiar strain on the clutch and transmission and also emphasises over-oiling and overheating under idling conditions. Such tests, therefore, are always included in a standardisation schedule of mileage, which at the outbreak of war consisted of the following:—

25,000 miles on the Continent (including a comprehensive tour in the Alps).

1,000 miles in London traffic.

When we first started our Continental tests it was on a basis of 10,000 miles running, but as road surfaces improved and the standard of reliability expected by the customer increased, we steadily raised the distance to be covered. The average speed of this Continental running is very high, and our records show that it has progressively increased in spite of the fact that there is probably ten times as much traffic on the French roads to-day as there was 20 years ago. This, of course, is simply an indication of the improved roadworthiness of the car and the increased engine performance.

The Continental running is not confined to running-miles alone; the test station is fully equipped to dismantle the chassis, and when troubles occur—as they are bound to do on all experimental cars—it is up to the staff to recommend a solution to the design department. To do this they frequently have to call upon the engineers from the Derby factory, who travel out to investigate the problems. This investigation work often takes quite as much time as the actual periods when the car is on the road. Generally speaking, four complete tests are run every year.

It is exceptionally difficult for the testers to avoid occasional accidents. I well remember that when we first started these tests, although other motorists were few and far between, the hazards of the roads were very considerable. Until about 1928 the livestock of every farm adjacent to the road made a practice of using this level stretch of ground for recreation. To cover a test-run of 500 miles without some sort of fatality was the exception rather than the rule. The roads were, of course, untarred in most cases and, in consequence, in wet weather it was not always possible to stop very hurriedly.

On one occasion when I was driving one of these test-cars and we had slowed down to about 40 m.p.h. to go through a village a sow of unusually large proportions attempted to cross the road. It was obviously a question of either hitting the sow or a poplar tree, and we, therefore, chose the sow, striking it very close to the tail with the dumbiron. Almost immediately the car was surrounded by a

crowd of gesticulating villagers, who appeared to spring from nowhere, and a somewhat heated argument ensued. Any conversation which I have in French is likely to cause misunderstanding and this particular instance was no exception to the rule, since I kept emphasising that *le cochon* was *mort*, and a shrivelled old lady, who appeared to be the owner of the sow, would keep referring to it as *une truie*. We rapidly came to an impasse, which was only surmounted when, by mutual consent, we adjourned to the domicile of the pig-keeper, where I was shown ten small pigs! No pains were spared to describe the probable death agonies of the infants, robbed of maternal care. However, the clouds lifted somewhat when we got back to the car and found "mother" uneasily cantering down the road. The next day I received a bill—a copy of which is printed below—for 1,000 frs.—500 frs. for the mother and 50 frs. for each *petit porcelet*—which was so obviously a "try-on" that I retaliated by another bill for 1,000 frs. for "damage done to the car." Before rendering this I took the precaution of having a very considerable party with the local *gendarme*. The matter was satisfactorily "settled out of court"—no money changing hands!

L'automobile C. H. No. 3995 a occasionné un accident a une mère truie nourissant 10 petits porcelets de 1 mois ; il sera très difficile de les élevé maintenant.  
Le dégat peut s'élever a 50 frs.  
par petits dépreciation total ... 500  
La mère peut rester infirme  
dépreciation ... .. 500  
Total ... .. 1000  
Fait au Fay le 27 Mars, 1924.  
L'expert,  
BRIGAND.

*Obituary*

1 Pig (female), Village Le Fay, near Argenton

Another catastrophic accident occurred when one of our drivers ran over ten turkeys at once. The mortality would have been reduced had not the turkeys been walking in line along the edge of the road, which was not sufficiently wide to admit the passing of two vehicles. Had the Continental test section had all its victims stuffed and put in a museum the result would have provided an astonishing spectacle.

Not the least of the problems in the early days was that of dust. It is no exaggeration to say that in the summer on certain roads the cloud of dust half-a-mile behind the car was so thick as to completely obscure visibility. The French cyclists, who abounded then as now, showed little appreciation of our activities, and we had to be careful not to use the same road too often. The level-crossing keepers soon came to know us and, in

## ROLLS-ROYCE CONTINENTAL TESTING—continued

common with all other employees of the French railways, showed a distinctly sporting instinct. They were always ready to appraise the speed of the approaching train and, if the odds were at all reasonable, took a chance that we would cross the line before the locomotive passed between the gates. The fact that we never hit a train testifies to their sound judgment.

Round about 1925 wheels and tyres were very troublesome. The straight-sided rims, which were held on by being sprung on to the wheel, used to come off at maximum speed, whereupon the tyre left the rim and the first indication of trouble which the driver had was that the car became somewhat uncontrollable. It was always difficult to find the rim, although one could usually keep an eye on the tyre as it bowled down the road ahead of the car.

In really hot weather when driving fast on bad roads, which were the rule rather than the exception, tyre-life was very unsatisfactory. I remember leaving a town about 100 miles south of Orleans at 10 o'clock in the morning to run someone to Dieppe and then go on to Paris. I started with a brand new set of five tyres and ran into Paris about 11 o'clock at night with one cover stuffed with hay.

It is difficult to over-estimate the value

of having straight, traffic-free roads available for experimental testing, and when, in addition, one is no longer worried by the production departments at the factory it is surprising what useful work can be accomplished.

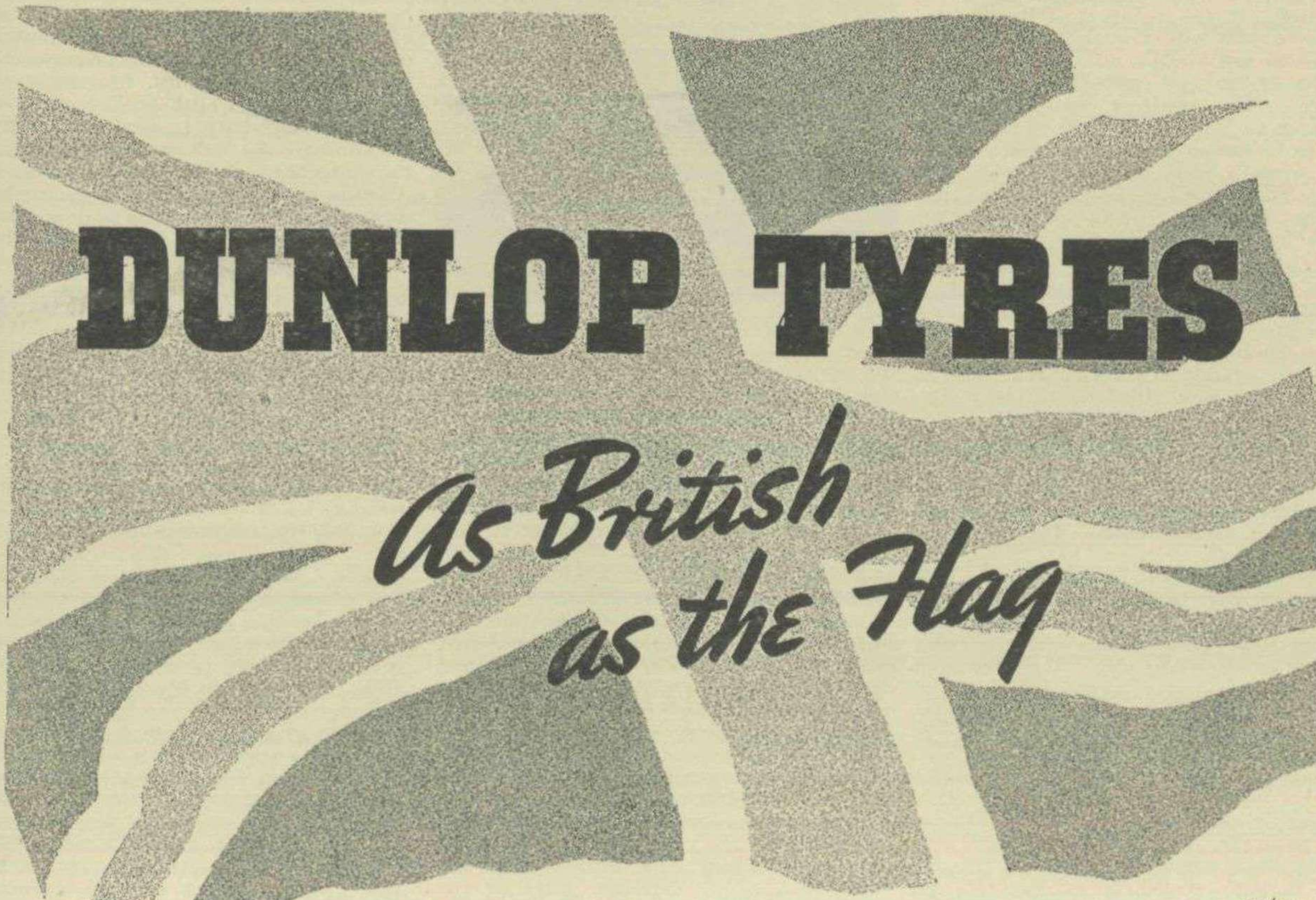
We had one rather puzzling problem when we first introduced four-wheel brakes on the "Silver Ghost" Rolls-Royce. We found that the average petrol consumption over roads which we knew well had dropped by over a mile to the gallon, which, since at the time we were getting only about 11 miles to the gallon, was something which could not be disregarded. The modifications which we had made to the engine in fitting these brakes were insignificant, being confined to a new exhaust manifold. The gear-ratio and the weight of the car remained unaltered. The poor fuel economy, therefore, appeared to be inexplicable. As a last resort, I instructed the drivers to carry out a test-run using nothing but the hand-brake, which operated only on the rear wheels. Our mile to the gallon was at once recovered, showing that good brakes increase the average speed of the car and so the fuel consumption.

Experience shows that if the bearings of a car will stand up to 20,000 miles of this Continental test they will have a life of 50,000 miles in the hands of the

ordinary British customer, who only crosses the Channel occasionally.

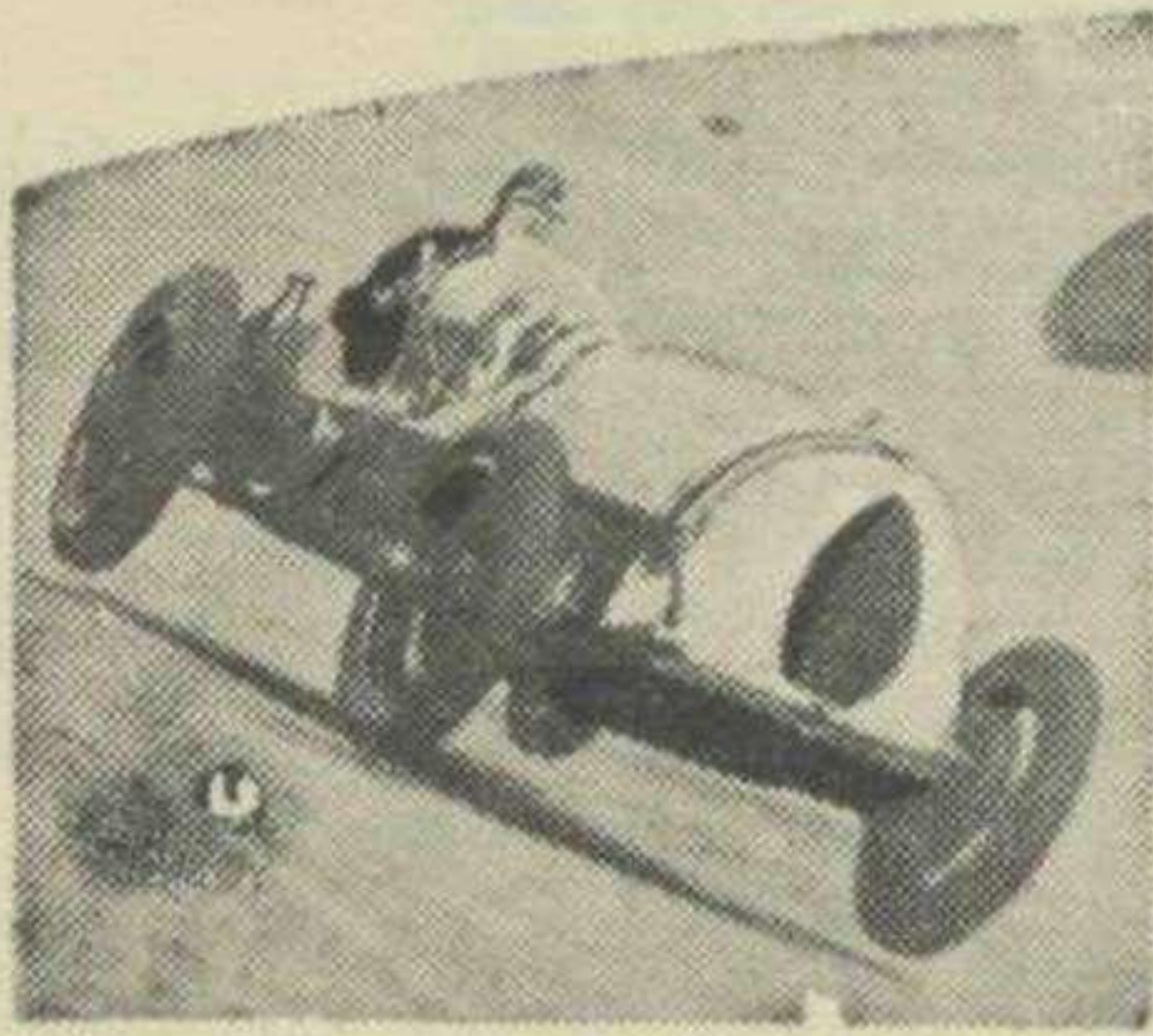
The German motor roads have presented an entirely new problem, which has been dealt with by the production of the "Corniche" Bentley, the evolution of which was recently described in MOTOR SPORT. If customers take standard Bentley cars on to the *autobahnen* they must restrict their sustained maximum speed to about 80 m.p.h. if they do not wish to reduce the life of the engine considerably. We do not apologise for this state of affairs. The winding roads of Britain require a rather specialised type of vehicle and, until they are brought up to date, the standard British car is bound to be much under-geared for modern automobile highways.

As may be imagined, the records of a million miles of Continental motoring provide an immense store of knowledge for future design work. The incidents—humorous and otherwise—which occurred during this testing would fill a book. For the time being, the overseas test section of the Rolls-Royce Experimental Department has, of course, had to close down. As soon as the war comes to an end, however, it will re-open, because we believe that, in the past, it has been in a large measure responsible for such degree of reliability as we have attained with our products.



# DUNLOP TYRES

*As British  
as the Flag*



## THE LIFE STORY OF PARRY-THOMAS

[The late J. G. Parry-Thomas, who was killed while attempting to raise his own "Land Speed Record" at Pendine Sands in 1927, is still remembered as one of the most famous and picturesque figures that the Sport has produced. One of his greatest achievements was taking the Brooklands Lap Record in 1925 at 129.36 m.p.h. with the Leyland-Thomson. At the outbreak of war this record stood only 14.08 m.p.h. higher—and it took a car of three times the Leyland's capacity, emanating from the works Thomas founded, ten years to raise it this amount. We have long wanted to publish the life history of the great driver-designer. Now, thanks to F. Sumner, A.M.I.A.E., who, after his discharge from the Army in 1916, worked with Thomas during the rest of the last war, and to Mr. A. F.

Saunders, who was associated with Thomas later as his Chief Draughtsman, it is possible to do so. We know that what these gentlemen, both of whom are very fully occupied on tank-design, have contributed will be read with keen interest by our readers, whether or not they saw "J.G.P.-T." in action.—Ed.]

**M**R. SUMNER writes: "I have been asked by the Acting Editor of MOTOR SPORT to write something on the life of the late J. G. Parry-Thomas for the benefit of its many readers who are admirers of the contributions this great designer and racing driver made to motor-racing. Actually, I know very little of Thomas's career, so I have asked a colleague of mine, who was in his employ until his unfortunate death and who spent years with him, to continue the story where I leave off, which he has kindly consented to do. I was with Parry-Thomas only during that period which must have led him up to the career of racing motorist.

"Prior to the 1914-18 war, Thomas was an electrical engineer and he devoted a great deal of his talent to petrol-electric trains and trams, designing the latter, for instance, in 1910 for Morecambe Corporation. It was in this capacity that he made contact with Leyland Motors, Ltd. This firm had made a number of rail-cars of his design and sold them to South Africa. This contract was maintained right up to 1914, when a lot of this work had to be dropped in favour of important war work. Soon after war broke out Parry-Thomas was co-opted as a member of the Munitions Inventions Board, an office he held throughout the war. In 1915, along with other well-known motor firms, the Leyland Company commenced designing aero-engines. Their engine was an eighteen-cylinder job of about 450 h.p. Parry-Thomas was persuaded to take over this new branch of the Company, and it was soon evident that he had his own opinions as to what aero-engine design should be like. Instead of carrying on with the eighteen-cylinder engine he produced one of his own layout. It was an eight-cylinder water-cooled radial, in the form of a Maltese cross. Thomas must have realised, even in those days, the importance of low frontal area. The cylinders were arranged in pairs from front to rear and the two crankpins were in the same phase to prevent a rocking couple from end to end. Each crankpin carried one master connecting rod and three articulated rods. It was a remarkably compact engine with an extremely good ratio of total weight to horse-power. It was something in the neighbourhood of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb./b.h.p., against the previous lowest of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lb./b.h.p. As was to be expected, the engine bristled with novel ideas. Oil was pressure-fed through the hollow crankshaft to the bearings and a built-up water pipe in the crank-

shaft cooled the oil as it passed through the crankshaft. The valve springs were of leaf-type, with slots at each end of the main leaves for engagement with the adjusting screws on the valve stems. These screws were in the form of a screw



*The Great Man himself in the famous Fair Isle pull-over*

in two parts, with one section of thread slightly out of step with the other, providing a locking device that was quite unique at that time. When screwed down, one part locked itself tightly on the valve stem, the cams operating directly on the screw. I believe Chrysler use a similar means of locking their tappets at the present time. The crankcase was of a special aluminium-alloy and the cylinders likewise, with wet liners. The bottom part of each cylinder liner was unjacketed and subjected to air delivered from a duct round the crankcase. The crankshaft ran directly in the crankcase, there being no white metal whatever. The final reduction to the propeller was through bevel gears, arranged very similarly to those in a car's differential, and giving a ratio of 2 to 1, the propeller thus being directly in line with the crankshaft. A Constantinesco gun-gear was incorporated, and the equipment actually included an electric self-starter and a generator.

"On the completion of the design, experimental work was commenced on a single-cylinder test rig. It was about this time that Mr. Reid Railton, now world famous in the sphere of high-speed car design, came to join our staff, if I remember rightly, straight from the University. He was not destined to stay long, as he shortly afterwards started a brief career in the Royal Navy on a motor boat, but he returned later during the design of the Leyland straight-eight car.

"During this research period Railton and I put in many long days and nights testing the single-cylinder version of the Thomas aero-engine, and when he left for the Navy the whole of the responsibility of testing and of the collection of data was entirely in my hands. I was with Thomas continually until this work concluded.

"Parry-Thomas was very exacting in his testing and research work. All manner of apparatus had to be devised at his command for testing various components, such as sparking plugs, magnetos, carburettors, etc., whilst special apparatus was also rigged up to test the speed of air through the valves, the efficiency of the propeller reduction gears, and so on. All this work was carried on unceasingly day and night, snatching a few hours' sleep when we could. At the same time, Thomas had to attend meetings of the Munitions Inventions Board, visit the Air Ministry and Admiralty, etc. He travelled at night, so as to get a little sleep. When he was satisfied that the single-cylinder unit had reached its peak of power development and crankshaft speed, the full-scale prototype engine was built. The first trials were made just before the Armistice of November, 1918, and were something of a disappointment. To reduce weight to a minimum, Thomas had skimmed the crankcase design and after a few hours' running this collapsed completely. With the Armistice the engine was abandoned; had it been proceeded with it would, I think, have been a big step forward in aero-engine design." [As it was, Thomas preceded the Daimler-Benz engineers in the adoption of this cylinder layout by some 25 years.—Ed.]

"The experience gained in developing the aero-engine was not wasted, for Thomas soon commenced the design of the Leyland straight-eight car, embodying in its engine a number of features of the aero-engine. This car was about ten years in advance of anything made at that time." [Probably it was more advanced

*Continued on page 473*

# Club News

## WE HEAR . . .

Bowen-Buscarlet, who used to drive a Riley Nine at Brooklands, is a Group Captain, R.A.F. Wing Cmdr. Scroggs now runs an S.S., and has been seen piloting a Bell "Airocobra," but has his Trojan in store; Fane is also interested in the Bell. Capt. J. J. Hall has dug out veteran and vintage motor-cycles with a vengeance, and his finds have included A.B.C., Scott, 1912 2½-h.p. Calcott, 1913 Clyno, Royal Enfield, 1914 Wooler 2-stroke, the ex-Harwood Zenith, and 1919 Rudge Multi. K. N. Hutchison wishes to acquire one of the 1½-litre, crab-track late-model trials Singers, if anyone can oblige. His address is Vale House, Lower Bourne, Frensham Vale, Farnham, Surrey. It is rumoured that Arthur Dobson is no longer in the R.A.F. John Cobb is, and was well featured in that altogether admirable film "Target for To-night." A'pine, Flanders, La Zebre and Brown Brothers cars are said to repose in a breaker's yard somewhere in Sussex. If R. G. J. Nash sees this will he please let us have his present address? John Bolster, whose fleet includes two Delages, two Fiats, an Isotta-Fraschini, the 1903 Panhard, two Austin Sevens and his "Specials," was injured recently by a runaway horse, but is fully recovered and is concerning himself with military matters. W. O. Manning, who knew Brooklands in pre-1914 days and designed many early aeroplanes, including the successful 400-c.c. "Wren," is with the Ministry of Aircraft Production. H. L. Benbough not only has one of the finest collections of veteran cars in the country and a very comprehensive library of early motoring books, but he also has two of Cecil Aldin's classic motoring paintings. One is "Gone Away," showing a girl driver of an early car sweeping out of an hotel yard and, inset as a strip below, going well in open country. The other is "A Check," showing her male companion "getting out and under" while she is smiling charmingly at a huntsman who is leading his horse—and the inset strip this time shows the unhappy automobilist being towed away by a horse while the huntsman has his arm well and truly round the girl! Apparently Aldin painted many hunting scenes, but these motoring pictures were by far his best; do any others exist? Mr. Benbough keeps his 1896 Bollee, 1897 de Dion Quad, 1899 de Dion Vis-a-Vis and 1903 Speedwell at his house in Reading, and hopes to hold an exhibition of veterans in that town around Christmas for a charity collection. The venue is at present proving difficult. Peter Clark badly needs a Fiat 500 rear axle. Kay, the racing motor-cyclist, is in the Army. His "Ulster" Frazer-Nash is laid up and he uses a 1928 racing Norton. At a certain breaker's yard in Berkshire we noted an H.E. Six 2-seater; an Aster saloon; a V-radiator Austro-Daimlersaloon

full of tyres; a Straight-Eight Wolseley; several Fiats, including "10/15" and Eight; early Rolls-Royce, Austin and Daimler; a flat-twin A.B.C. engine; a three-wheeler so overgrown that it could not be identified; "10/30" (?) s.v. Alvis tourer in fair order; "12/50" Alvis, a recent-model Star saloon; a Merry-weather solid-tyred fire-engine chassis; a "14/40" touring Sunbeam; a white-wheeled s.v. Ceirano saloon; an 11.9 Lagonda engine with lateral valve rockers; an early Hudson, and many others. Nor was that all, for model steam engines, a 1907(?) chain-drive two-cylinder Riley, two steam-rollers, a chaise, another fire engine and the remains of an aero-engine were mixed up amongst them. The 7-h.p. 1911 two-cylinder de Dion which escaped bomb damage by a hair's-breadth in London is now at Anerley with J. G. Walters's two 1900 de Dions, for one of which he recently refused 100 gns. The 1911 car is for sale at around £25 and is 100 per cent. A "12/50" Alvis with three up in the front seat was encountered going fast, and with rousing exhaust note, near Twyford recently, and a pointed-tail Standard Nine was seen at the same spot. The Editor has acquired a four-cylinder Delage "Voiturette Legere," which he hopes to use regularly in the near future. He wishes to thank the person who, at the "Rembrandt," through Cecil Clutton, presented him with a little plaque bearing the magic inscription: "Meteorite Light Car; Mfrs., Meteorite Cars, Ltd., 142, Uxbridge Road, London, W.12." If only the car itself could be found. . . . A.T.A. Pilot Rodney Clark was exercising his Type 43 Bugatti last month.

Many people require small sports cars in the "12/50" Alvis or Frazer-Nash category. There is a 4½-litre Bentley saloon for sale in Worthing at £15 and a 1929 12-h.p. s.v. sports Riley in the Midlands at £35. Johnnie Green reports a good run to Bournemouth in the ex-Wilton 3-litre Bentley, getting 21 m.p.g. He and Dalton recently took the latter's Le Mans 4½-litre Bentley to Norfolk for safe storage, doing 100 miles in about two hours, at approximately 12 m.p.g., although they didn't exceed 80 m.p.h. They encountered a Guards officer in a 2-seater 4½-litre Bentley on the Barnet Bypass and a green 4½-litre Lagonda. Green estimates that only about eight racing 4½-litre Bentleys are in existence, counting T.T., Le Mans and "Double-Twelve" cars. The Norris Brothers have bought a single-cam "2.3" 500-Mile-Race Bugatti from Lemon Burton, with ½-elliptic rear suspension installed by Thomson & Taylor, and remote feed to the grease nipples.

A request has been received for "J4" M.G. spares or information as to what happened to the car of this type which R. D. Poore crashed at Crystal Palace;

information to G. V. Coles, 11, Lynchmore Avenue, N. Lancing, Sussex, please. David and Joe Fry are both in the R.A.F., and Cowell and Mallock have transferred from the Army to the R.A.F., in which A. F. Scroggs is now a Group Captain. The ex-Billy Cotton B.M.W. is owned by Dunn, a London enthusiast. Fane is said to be getting 110 m.p.h. on "Pool" out of his 328. The rotary-valve Inman (Talbot "10/23") "Special" is soon due for trials, and someone else is busy applying a £10 gas-producer to a "14/45" Talbot, with the assistance of the B.V.D. Company. Mrs. Whincop has exchanged her Fiat 500 for a 1934 Austin Seven and a D-type M.G. Midget, and also has an "Air-line" Renault. G. H. G. Burton is hoping to get into the R.A.F. as a pilot. His friend's Aston-Martin is still laid-up, but he has a supercharged Riley Nine which started life as a "Gamecock" and which does some 95 or more m.p.h. We hope soon to write it up. The Ruby engine from the friend's Aston went to a short-chassis Lancia "Lambda" owner in Cambridge and said friend (A. G. S. Anderson, you remember) used a very temperamental Wolseley Hornet "Special," colour blue (called the "B.B.B.," translate as you will), before going to Malta. A Speed Six Bentley tender is used by the N.F.S. in Essex, and the R.A.F. was seen motoring well at Twyford in a grey "30/98" Vauxhall a week after the "12/50" was seen motoring rapidly on the same road. A very early Fiat motor omnibus graces a Farnborough garage. An Isotta-Fraschini sports saloon, in very good condition and with sound tyres, is reported for sale, at £20 to £30, in Maidenhead. But taxed at £56 5s. . . . Dick Caesar now tours the country on work of national importance. He used to have a 6½-litre Bentley with a body weighing 38 lb. The "Freikaiserwagen" which he and the Frys drove had nearly £600 spent on it—V-twin "Specials" are an inexpensive introduction to the Sport! Robin Jackson, Tyrell Smith and Caesar are all with the Bristol Aeroplane Co., Ltd. An aircraftsman at a station in Hampshire uses a two-speed Scott motor-cycle, which keeps company with a 500-c.c. H.R.D. Eric Sidney slipped up in the engine dimensions of cars which held the Hour Record, incorporated in his table published last month, and is duly corrected by Laurence Pomeroy—the 1912 Sunbeam was driven by Resta, Coatalen being the entrant, and it was of 6,301 c.c.; the 1913 Talbot was 4,531 c.c., the Peugeot, the 1912 G.P. car, of 7,603 c.c., and the twelve-cylinder Sunbeam was of 9,048 c.c. Then the Leyland-Thomas had a capacity of 7,266 c.c. in 1924 and it was a four-cylinder Panhard of 4,083 c.c. which took the record in 1926, the later Panhard being the eight-cylinder car of 7,965 c.c. The 1937 Mormon Meteor was

## CLUB NEWS—continued

apparently of 26,238 c.c., the Napier-Railton of 23,942 c.c. and "Speed of the Wind" of 21,236 c.c., while the Thames car of 1907 was of 13,513 c.c. The Auto-Union's capacity is seemingly only approximate, the bore and stroke never being declared.

Douglas Tubbs recently bought a second D.K.W. ("Joachim"), but has decided to keep "Rudolf" in commission, so the other is up for sale. Second Lieut. Gregg recently purchased a 1930 "Silver Eagle" Alvis 2-seater from an advertiser in this paper. Seen near Andover and in Basingstoke respectively—a sports "12/50" Alvis 4-seater and an "Ulster" Austin Seven driven by the R.A.F. Lieut. Bainbridge, R.N., has been using the short chassis, ex-Marcus Chambers, ex-Allison 4½-litre Bentley 2-seater during a spell of leave; it runs nicely on "Pool" on a 9½-to-1 compression ratio, with the mags. notched back to some extent. A red-label 3-litre Bentley 4-seater that was for sale in Aldershot at £98 had one S.U. carburetter in action all the time and the other arranged to come in on operation of the air lever, as a war-economy measure.

## VINTAGE S.C.C.

The "Rembrandt" party of the Bugatti Owners, E.R.A. and Vintage S.C.C. was 100 per cent. successful, as indicated by our report last month. It is said that another is brewing for the spring and we look forward to it very much indeed—although, of course, by then this country may "have regained her former place amongst the leading nations of the world" (*vide* a recent news-reel) and restricted socials be replaced by active competition. Someone by the initials "D.J.C." was kind enough to attempt to send us a report of the "Rembrandt" party on the very evening of that event, when, we gather, the normally able secretary of the Vintage S.C.C. was not in the mood. His deputy produced an account, of which the major portion must be withheld to safeguard him (or her?), and ourselves, from instant libel action! A few extracts follow:—

"Rembrandt," October 5th, 1941.

An excellent attendance, believed to be in the region of 220, inclusive of gatecrashers and those who admitted to being ticketless. The gathering was even more representative of the sporting world than that at Chessington Zoo.

The meeting began in the morning, as an entirely informal gathering of enthusiasts, some with E.R.A. or M.G. Club badges in their lapels and other badgeless ones of strange appearance, calling themselves "750 Club Members" (whence the strange name? They did not number 750 and appeared ill able to pay subscriptions to 750 different clubs). Anon the assembled company adjourned to an inner chamber, wherein to partake of both food and drink in quantities not to be despised in these lean years; and so it came to pass that, replete and mellowed with good wine, there arose before the gathering a monocled one by name Pomeroy. Now, when the sounds of merrymaking and the cries of "Hy'a, Hermann" had faded away, it came to pass that the oracle whose Temple (Press) is in the lane nigh unto the Bowling Green did speak great words of wisdom (every Tuesday, 6d., order from your news-agent to-day). Thus spoke Pomeroy, son of Pomeroy, in this year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-one come Michaelmas: "To blow or not to blow, that is the question; whether 'tis better to suffer the gongs and summonses of outraged coppers, or to crawl along—". At this point a vital piece of glazing fell from the left eye of the great man, but with magnificent sang froid such as one expects from officers and/or gentlemen, he screwed it yet more firmly in his right eye and the peroration continued "Ladies and Gentlemen" (cries of

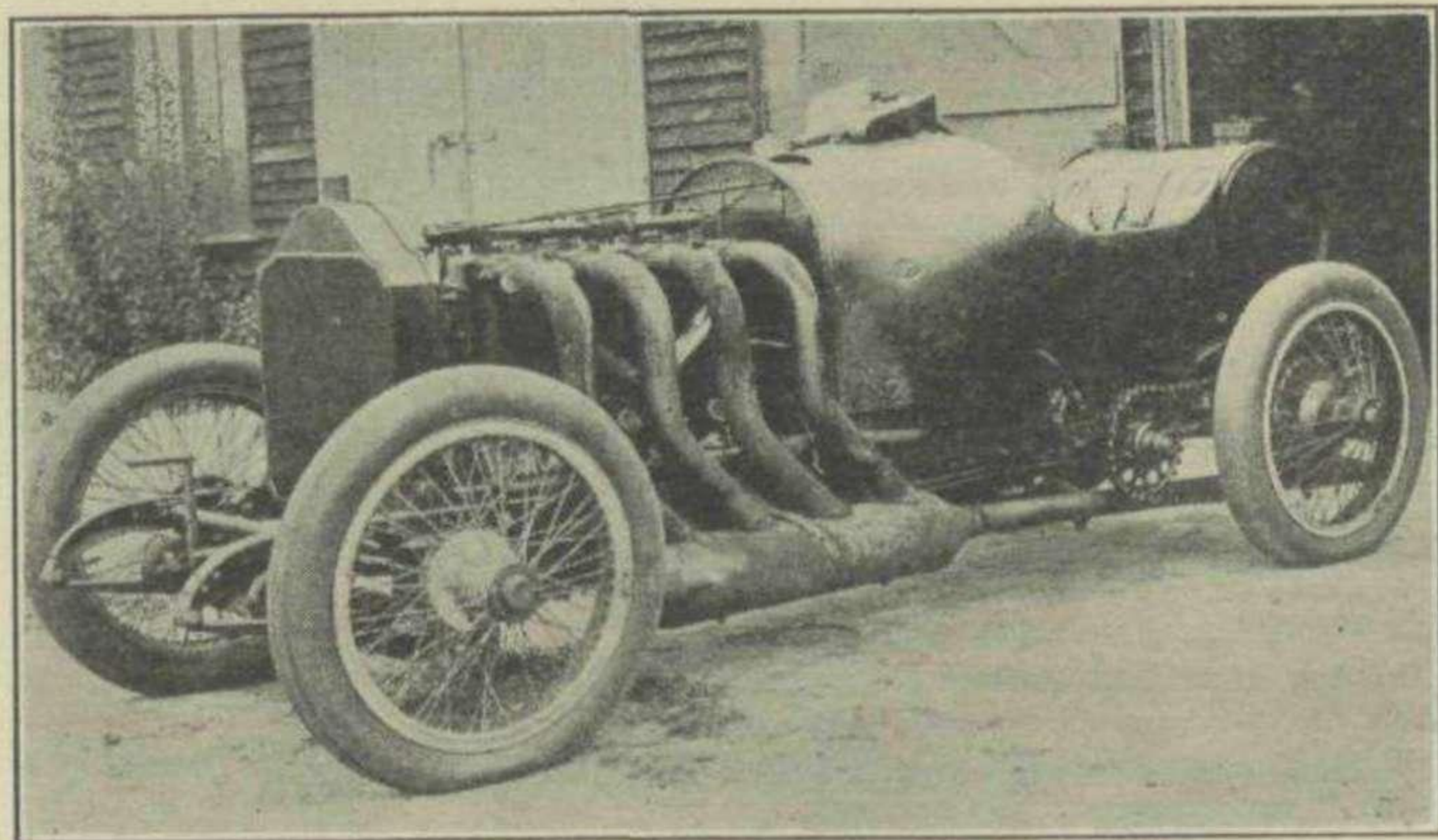
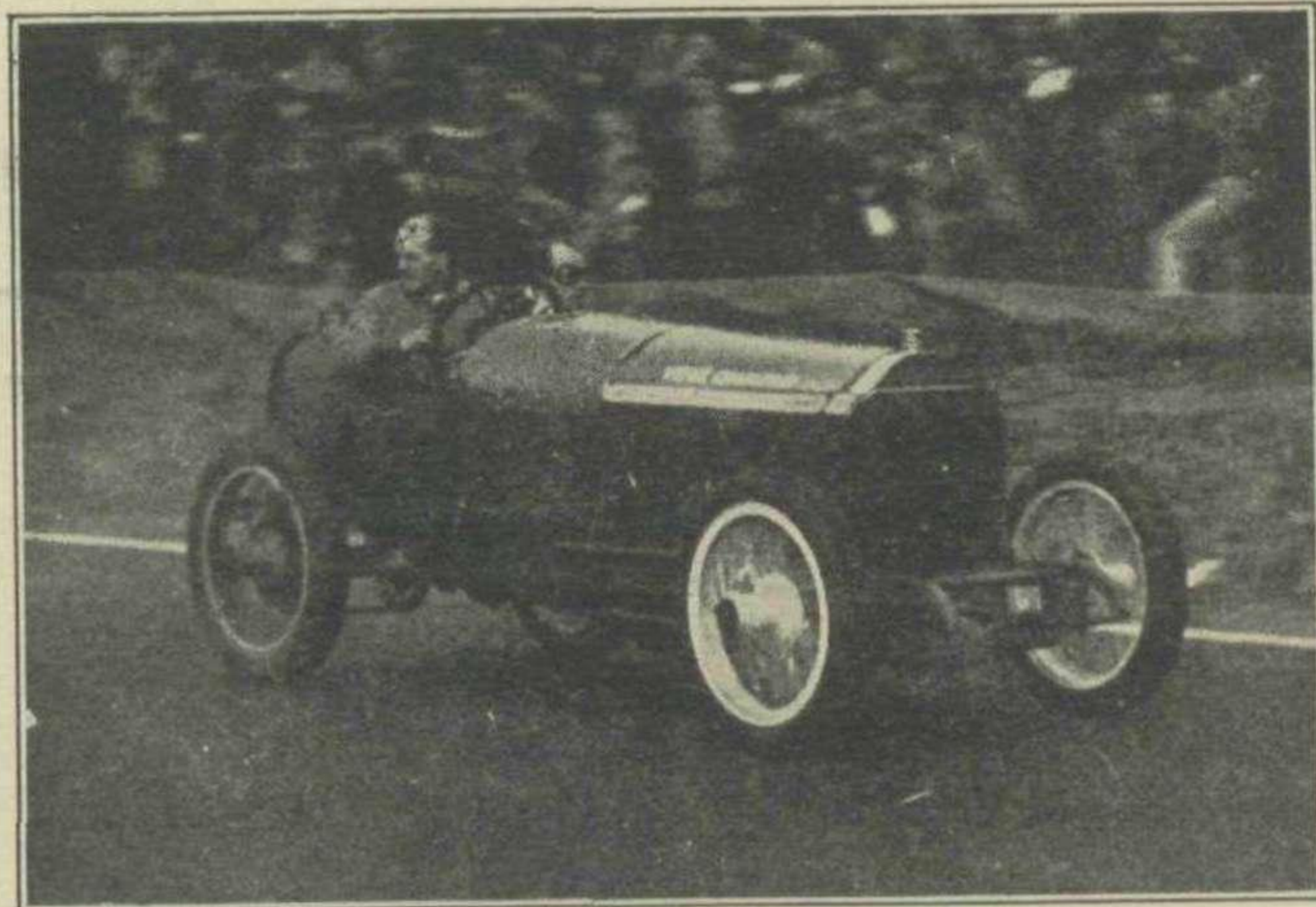
"where?" from neighbours of 750 Club members), "we have with us to-night many learned men, Vizors, Grand Viziers . . ." Much more spake the Pom, but anon the flow of words did abate, and the vast figure drooped and fell to its accustomed place beneath the ravaged table.

Then up rose Forrest, son of Lycett, wearing sackcloth and ashes (11 coupons) and with straws in his coiffure, saying, "Woe is me. Alack, alack, I am undone. For hath not a buzz-box overtaken the 4½-litre, and hath not the synchromesh box triumphed over the Type-D masterpiece of the House of Bentley. Let me now convert my 8-litre to an automobile of three cylinders that runs upon producer gas, for the glory that was Lycett has passed. Ichabod."

Many more voices were heard at that festive board, and yet more spake but were not heard; but around the hour of three those of the company who remained mobile did go into a dark place,

## J.C.C.

Recently the Junior Car Club held yet another luncheon for members of its Council, a very excellent way of keeping track of these persons at a difficult period of the Club's history. Capt. A. Frazer-Nash, in particular, came a very long distance that morning to attend. The July-September "Gazette" is out, and from it we extract, with acknowledgments, the following news of well-known personalities:—D. E. R. Greig is Platoon Commander, Home Guard, and is assembling his Frazer-Nash and 2.3 Alfa-Romeo; A. Percy Bradley is Acting



Dick Nash's Lorraine-Dietrich was found just in time. In the bottom picture it is seen standing derelict at Brooklands, its value estimated at a fiver. Above, restored, it is seen in action on the Crystal Palace circuit

where one Monkhouse did work great wonders. And as silver and white cars dashed across the screen he was heard to say how they were slow and unreliable, and how ill fitted their chauffeurs were even to conduct an omnibus. "The little automobiles of England," quoth he, "both E.R.A. and Alta, are of far finer mettle than any Teuton trash, and any varlet who says aught to the contrary should be hanged by the neck till he be dead."

Much more happened in the House of Rembrandt, even to the serving of a noxious beverage, bedight "tea," but time marches on (advert.) and the call of the Press is insistent. So, till that day when Cecil of the Cluttons feels more fit to wield the pen than I now do to punch these dancing keys, let this information satisfy the great British public. Vive le Sport!

You must not believe a word of it. But, my, oh my, what a party!

Pilot Officer on Probation, acting rank of Flying Officer, R.A.F.V.R., Training Branch, attached to A.T.C.; J. G. Bergel, late dramatic critic and motoring correspondent of the "Evening News," is an A.T.A. Ferry Pilot, as is Dr. Whitehead, the Track M.O.; F. L. M. Harris is now Sqdr. Ldr., R.A.F.; H. J. O. Ripley has been invalidated out of the R.A.S.C.; Lieut. Neville Lloyd is a prisoner of war in Italy; Cuff Miller, who used to race Cotton and Sunbeam motor-cycles, is a Pilot, Fleet Air Arm; R. J. P. Morley, the A.C. exponent, is in the R.T.R.; Harold Nockolds is a Lieut., R.A.S.C.

## CLUB NEWS—continued

## C.U.A.C.

Socials seem doubly attractive after the success and enjoyment of the Chessington and "Rembrandt" parties, and this is a reminder that similar friendships will be renewed and another good time had by all at the Cambridge University Automobile Club's dinner scheduled for November 29th.

## DISABLED DRIVERS' CLUB

We are pleased to hear that the Disabled Drivers' Club, under F. J. Dupee, is weathering the storm, at a reduced subscription rate.

## JOB FOR THE CENSOR

Some of the recent correspondence in a contemporary.

## GET YOU HOME!

W. G. S. Wike, who, incidentally, expects to be living "down South" in the future, often writes to his friend Sam Clutton. Here is an extract (with acknowledgments) from a recent letter:—

"To disarm the elements, to render motorists scatheless from rain, dust, cold and wind, have for years been the supreme objects of Burberry endeavours. Less elusive than the Poles, the Goal has been reached.

"Travel at express speed through sunshine and storm in open cars without shelter is now made as comfortable as sitting indoors.

"The motor becomes a Sanatorium for the nerves, with all pernicious attributes excluded!"

The above is accompanied by a picture of a terrified gentleman, in a cloth cap and shroud, ascending an extremely well-drawn motor-car, which, unfortunately, lacks a steering wheel and column. Date 1909.

"BROKEN FRONT AXLE, WHEELS, AND STEERING GEAR." This would, I am afraid, put the modern motorist off his tea completely, but not so the hardy traveller of Edwardian days, who would "obtain two short scaffolding poles or other similar pieces of wood and lash them to the frame of the car, so that they project five or six feet in front of the car. Borrow(!) a two-wheel light cart, and turn it with its shafts toward the car, standing in front of the car, with the shafts projecting back over the driver's seat. Now jack up the car, and sling the ends of the scaffolding poles to the axle of the cart by ropes, allowing a fair amount of swing if possible. The front wheels will now be off the road. Start up the engine and drive the car slowly, steering by the

shafts of the cart used as a tiller or Bath Chair handle."

Referring to the above, they say: "The writer has never tried it and is indebted to 'The Horseless Age' for the idea."

I really think the above idea is worth trying some time on the Brighton Run: it would interest the competitors, if nothing else. It is possible to foresee certain technical disadvantages, but they would no doubt be overcome, as in the case of Lawrence of Arabia's "Silver Ghost" Rolls-Royce, when pursued by a few Mercedes across the desert the chassis broke in half, but was tied together with string and firewood (I think), and ran in this condition for about two years.

## GENERAL NOTES

High spot of last month, apart from a day spent amid the admirable old-time atmosphere of a motor-cycle trial on Pirbright Heath, was a trip to bring the veteran Delage home from Worthing. We went down on an absolutely perfect October day through perfectly lovely Surrey and Sussex scenery, not forgetting the one-way bridge, replete with its own traffic lights, near Petworth; they were appreciated more on the outward journey than when they almost elected not to change as the rather brakeless Delage approached downhill later in the day. . . . Enquiry at a small dump, where an old man gave us very concise directions while we gazed absent-mindedly at a Sizaire-Berwick radiator, and we came to a more ambitious yard, boats mingled with broken-up cars, where reposed the object of our search. She was a compact 2-seater, identical to the one on which we had paid a deposit, but never collected, away up at Colchester before the war came. Her grey paintwork, hiding the brass of the radiator, suggested long-ago military service on the Continent; the Colchester car was finished in just the same way. There seemed little wrong with her, except a seized footbrake cross-shaft and noisy timing gears. The tyres blew up and stayed up. A very aged man helped to move a pile of assorted road springs which impeded her exit from what might well have been her final resting place. (They were, even then, smashing up a Straight-

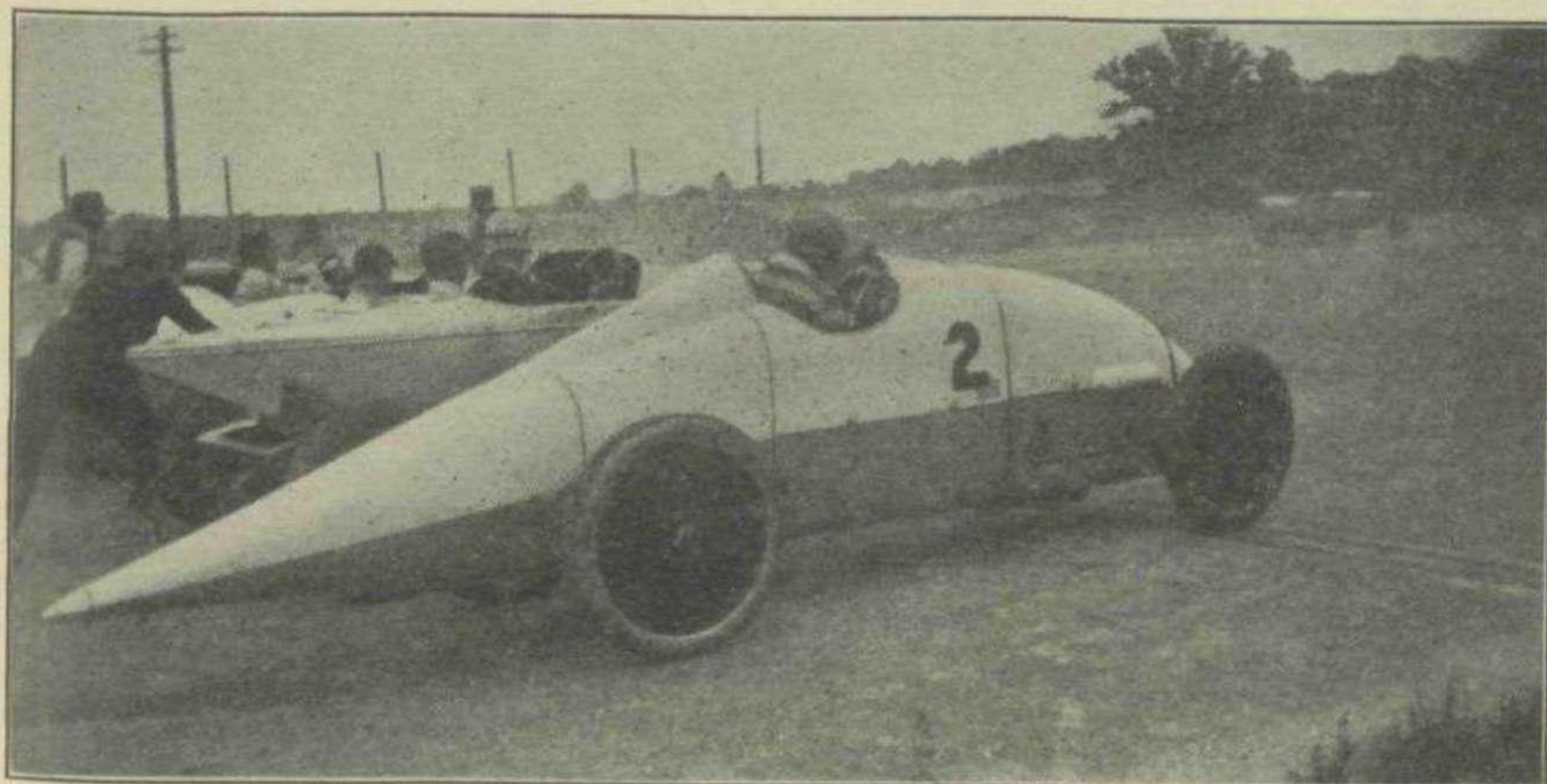
Eight Delage.) We noted her safety glass screen and electric lights, and six pound notes changed hands. A wire tow-rope was hastily fixed round the back axle of the modern and to a dumb-iron of the Delage. We wrote ourselves a receipt, for our friend, the breaker, could not write himself. Something of the joyful existence of the past loomed as we donned an ancient leather coat and climbed up to take the wooden steering wheel. But wars cannot be so easily forgotten. We had but a brief respite from toil and no lamp for the black-out. We went along as fast as we could, eight horses towing ten, eleven, maybe fourteen. . . . Every downhill was exciting, the push-on hand-lever operating a quite vague transmission brake of small diameter, which very soon caught fire. Stopping by a lake, we filled the radiator preparatory to engaging a low gear, and curiosity won. We filled the French Claudel carburetter, wound on the handle, and off she went, clouds of smoke astern suggesting that oil had seeped slowly down her solitary drip-feed tube with the passing years.

It was as well that we got her going, for there came a hill up which the Austin couldn't pull her. She drove herself up and did so on several other occasions, until the main jet fell out of the carburetter, which necessitated taking that component off complete from the inlet flange, what time two tiny girls watched critically, until one announced to the other: "When I grow up I'm going to drive a car, but not one like that. . . ." We felt rather the same by then, and soon cast off the tow-rope at a friendly garage at Godalming. A seat some feet lower and glass windows to wind now seemed extremely to the point, and much rushing hither and thither took place in the blackness in search of a meal of adequate proportions. The next Saturday, with a bicycle rear lamp, we brought her home, and another old car had escaped the breaker's hammer.

## THE LIFE STORY OF PARRY-THOMAS—continued from page 470

amongst unfreakish designs than any car before or since. A description and road-test report appeared in MOTOR SPORT in

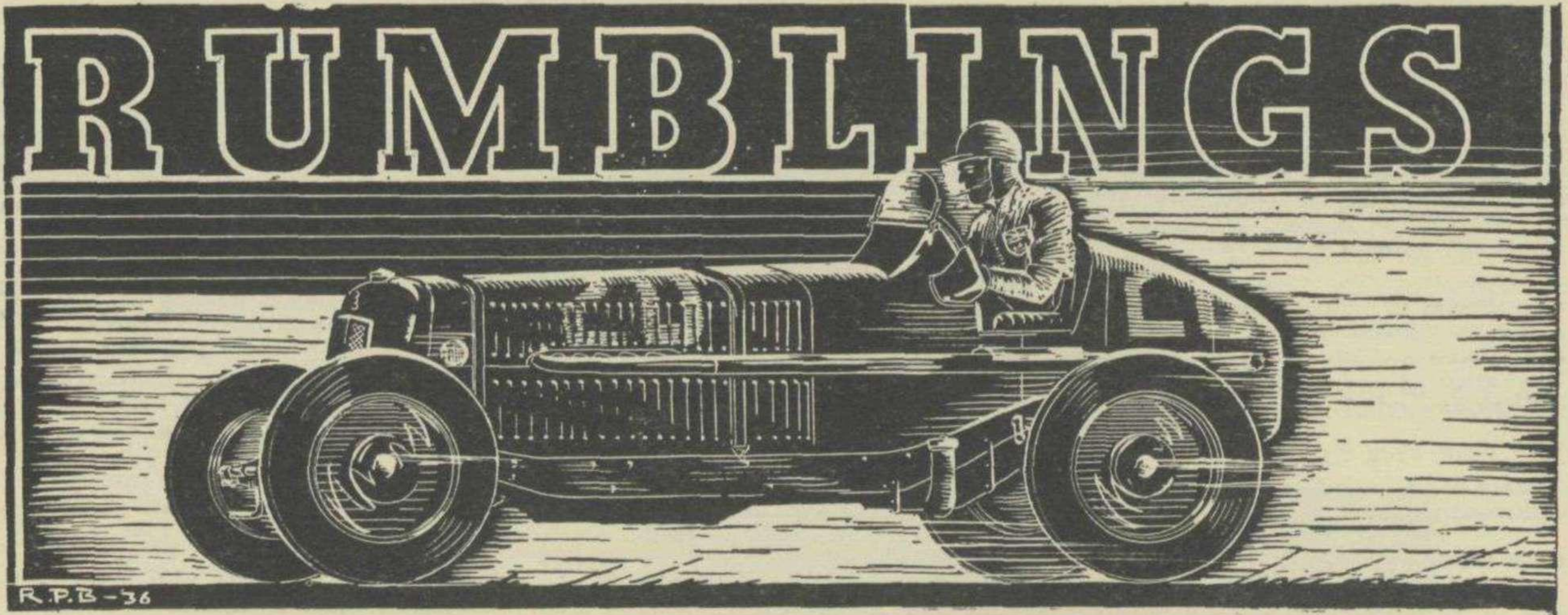
February, 1938.—Ed.] "It was a remarkable car and I know all the staff enjoyed working on it.



J. G. Parry-Thomas in his four-cylinder 1½-litre Thomas "Special," with bodywork based on that of the 1924 Leyland-Thomas

"To conclude this stage of Thomas's career I would like to recall that when he joined Leyland's in 1916 I do not think he could drive a car. My father tells of often taking him out on 6-ton lorries to give him driving experience. Thomas later bought an old Fafnir to get around in which was only capable of about 30 m.p.h. When he first drove a Leyland straight-eight he took to high speed as a duck takes to water; everyone predicted a short life and a merry one! On one occasion when he and the Managing Director went to London in one of these cars, Thomas wagered that he could leave Euston at the same time as the North-bound express and be in Preston before the train, a journey of about 212 miles by road. And he did! It was a remarkable piece of driving in a standard car, and it was possibly this feat which decided Parry-Thomas to take up motor-racing after he left the Leyland Company."

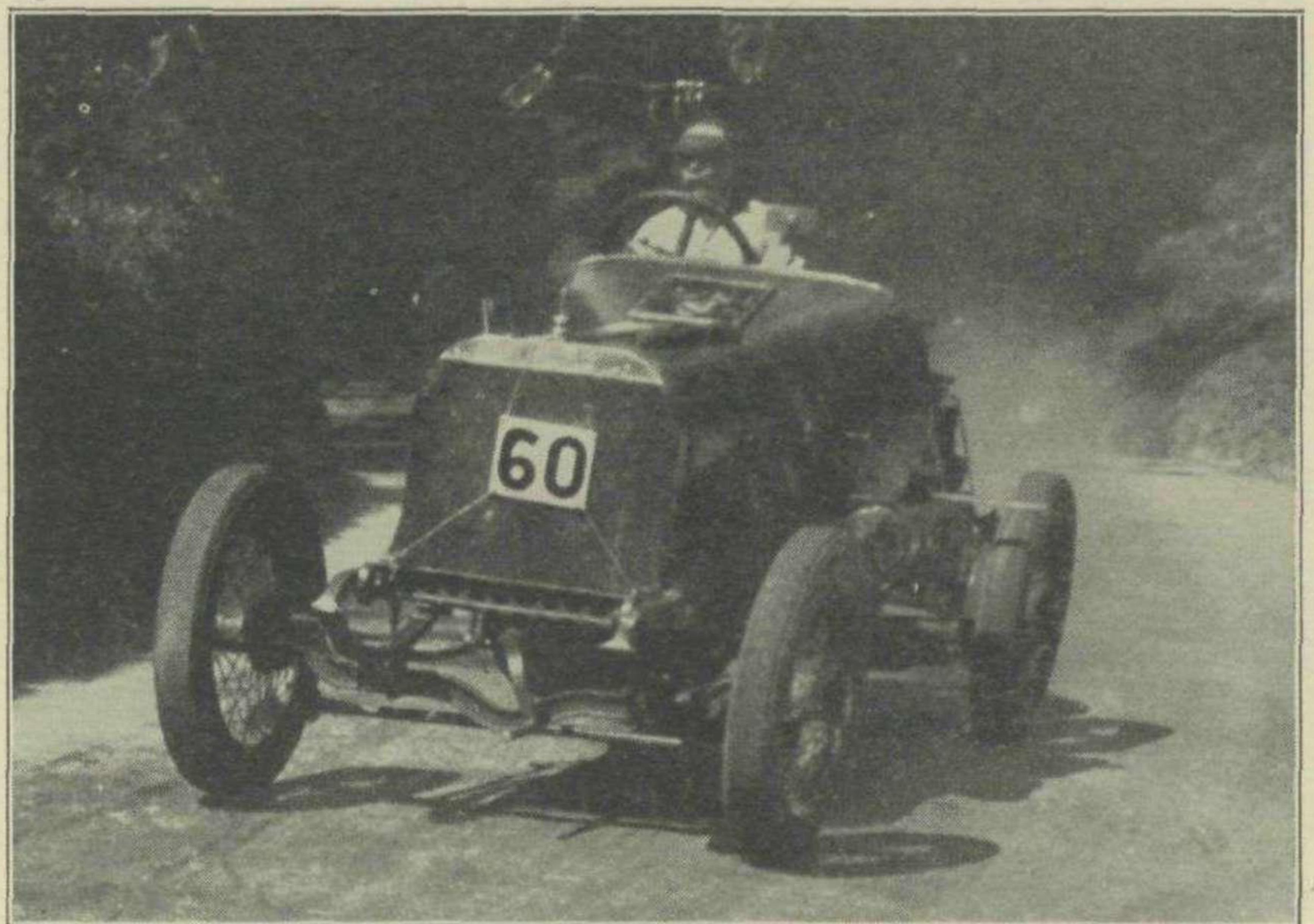
[As Mr. Saunders's "copy" was not to hand at the time of going to press this article will be continued.]



### The Sports E.R.A.

**T**HE E.R.A. would have been produced as a sports car if poor Murray Jamieson had not been killed when the Delage ran into the spectators at the last International Trophy Race. Jamieson, who designed the Roots supercharger used on the earlier E.R.A. engines and who evolved the wonderful little o.h.c. racing Austins, set himself three major tasks when he laid out the sports E.R.A. These were publicly announced in "Speed" in 1937 and in no other paper. They were: a speed of well over 100 m.p.h. with closed body work, approximately 20 m.p.g., and an ability to serve for 100,000 miles without decarbonisation. To achieve his aim Jamieson decided to use a 4-litre push-rod o.h.v. six-cylinder engine. The crankshaft ran in four bearings and cooling was by pump, with high-speed flow round the cylinder head. Crankcase and cylinder block were a single casting of light alloy, with wet cylinder liners. Lubrication was on a semi-dry sump system, with thermostatic temperature control, the main sump being alongside the crankcase and the smaller one in the conventional position. The main sump was carefully shaped to guard against oil surge away from the pump when braking and accelerating. It was planned to use a thin lubricant, running normally at an oil temperature of 90° C. The two valves per cylinder were vertically disposed in a slab combustion space and, after experiments with twin plugs, a single plug per cylinder and coil ignition were decided on. Wide-gap ignition was to have been experimented with. The engine had two carburettors and peaked at 4,500 r.p.m. A separate gearbox was used, with synchro-mesh on all gears, and a direct drive third speed of 4.0 to 1,

in which 95 m.p.h. was claimed. Top was an over-drive of 3.25 to 1, aimed to collect a gait of 115 m.p.h., "according to conditions." The gearbox had pressure lubrication and the synchro-mesh cones were 5" in diameter. The suspension was independent all round, that at the front having linkage similar to the racing chassis, but using coil springs instead of torsion bars. It was said to be free from kick, and to give constant castor, trail and camber, and to be aperiodic. The brakes would probably ultimately have been of E.R.A.'s own four-shoe design. Only a saloon was to be made initially, to sell at £800. Why bring all this up? Because someone up in Nottingham, according to a fantastic rumour that is sailing round, is alleged to have walked into a local cycle shop and said, "Please, have you an E.R.A.?" and to have been presented with this engine, gearbox, and spares



Will you help find the veterans? Here is Clutton's 1908 Sixty Itala going well up Shelsley-Walsh—only a few years ago it stood forlornly in an Ilford garage



*RUMBLINGS—continued*

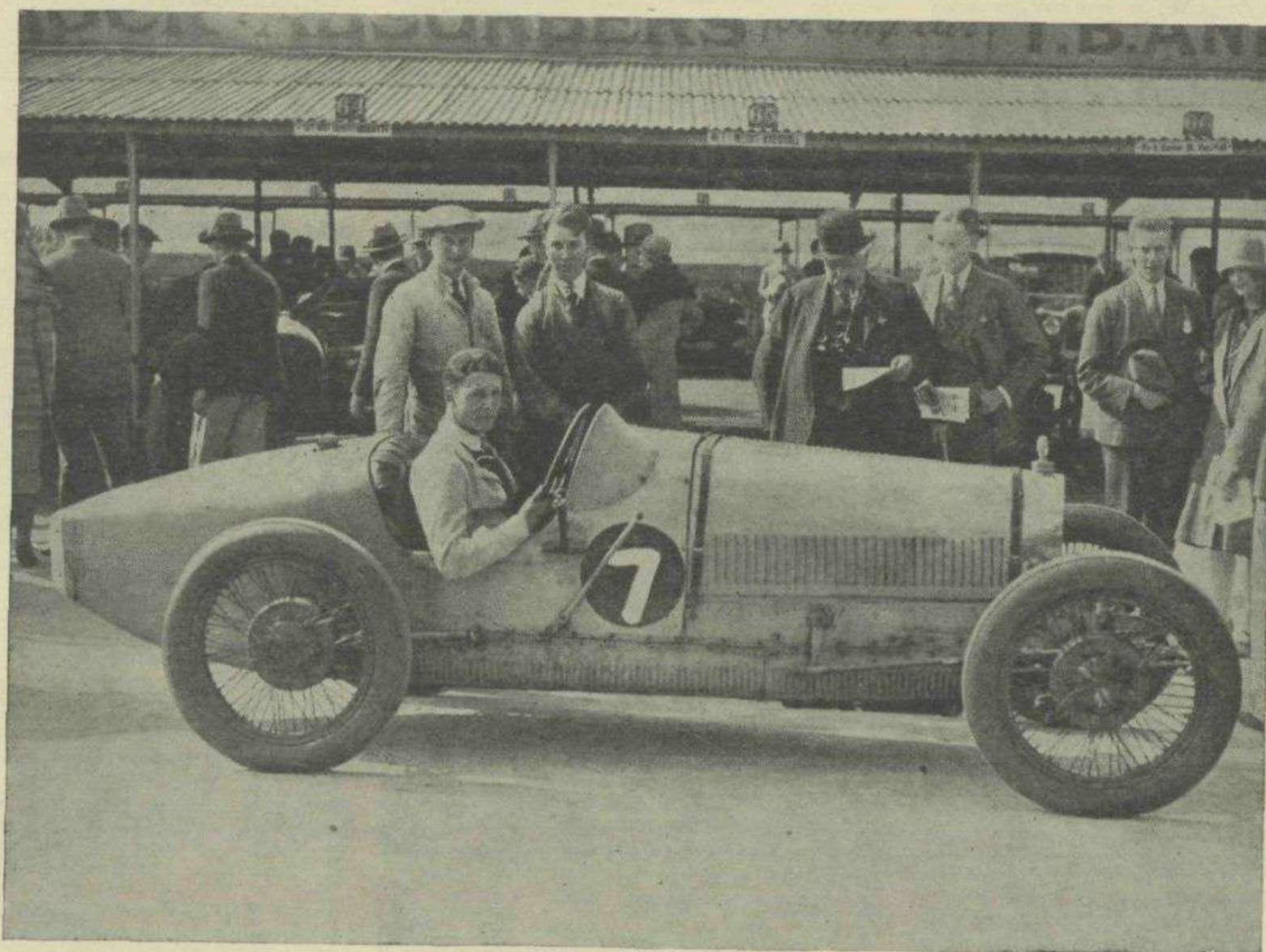
enough to build up two more, and—wait for it—a completely hush-hush 5-litre Grand Prix E.R.A. engine. It sounds fantastic, but we believe there is a good deal of truth in it. The 5-litre, about which the buyer will tell us nothing, is said to have been sold to a well-known racing driver, while the 4-litre is retained and the owner's perpetual inquiry since finding it is: "Where did the chassis go?"

It reminds us of something quite different. A scrap-metal merchant heard of a two-cylinder, rear-engined, friction-drive G.W.K. for sale and went to get it. He found it in good order, with petrol in the tank and evident signs of having been run very recently, but

to Walter Norton's sister. Also present were Peter and Ariel Clark, Joan Brotchie, Howard Koppenhagen and Gordon Wilkins. We are glad Koppenhagen is about again after his long illness. He, Norton and Derek Loader were, of course, responsible for the "Jabberwock" team of Ford V8's which had such a splendid run of successes in trials and rallies before the war.

**Register**

If you have enjoyed the "Veteran Types" articles which have appeared at intervals in MOTOR SPORT for the past ten years, will you please help to save historic,



*Recognise him? Christopher Staniland and the Bugatti he drove in 1926. He is nowadays doing vital test flying in a civilian capacity*

with the drive disconnected from the friction mechanism to the rear axle. Asked why this was, the owner replied: "Oh! I use it as a knife-cleaner." And he really did!

**Party**

On the 11th of last month another enthusiasts' party happened at the "Rembrandt," if for a more important purpose, in the mind of Capt. Desmond Hall, R.A.O.C., than that which the Vintage, E.R.A. and Bugatti Clubs held at the same place a week earlier; it was the occasion of Capt. Hall's marriage

interesting, or merely unique cars from destruction by sending details of any that you find for disposal to the Register which is suggested elsewhere in this issue? Thank you!

**Apology**

Last month we associated Douglas Tubbs, through a lapse of memory, with a rather scandalous story of what is alleged to have happened to some policemen who thought Major "Goldie" Gardner's brakes were weak. This is definitely not Tubbs's story and naturally he wants us to say so. Apologies!

## WEEK-END WITH A DAIMLER EIGHTEEN

[In this rationed age regular Editorially-conducted road-tests are not possible, so we have to seek the assistance of our readers. Your enthusiast must motor, and Peter Robertson-Rodger hired a modern Daimler from Daimler Hire. Here are his impressions of this British quality car.—Ed.]

**I**N these Hun-enlightened days of rationing, cadging and petty scrounging of the ever-elusive petrol coupon, the golden prospect of motoring 280 miles in a single week-end was a glittering vision indeed. It so happened that much motoring was suddenly necessary all at once, including attending the enthusiasts' lunch party at the Rembrandt, and since, even in wartime, right-minded persons still consider the future of the Island Race, a country wedding was slated for the following day.

The answer was soon found: a 'phone call to Daimler Hire, a few courteously conducted formalities, in which cheques and forms of indemnity were largely concerned, and the motor-car was ours for three days. It seemed a strange sensation for a moment that we were actually going to *drive* a Daimler. Analysing this feeling later, one put it down to not being "Daimler conscious," as it were. I mean, when one thought about Daimlers at all one automatically associated them with a rather dusty smell, funerals, unhappy debs. being stared at in the Mall and Royalty. Somehow, I do not feel I am alone in this matter. . . .

Well, the next thing that happened was an explanation of what all the knobs and handles were for. This survey was remarkable only for a pronouncement by our mentor which surely should go down in ballad and song: "That? Oh, that's just the ignition lever—no need to bother about *that*." Next, a trip round the houses, to satisfy the insurance people of our skill. This skill was rather sadly lacking, since acquaintance with the peculiarities of the Wilson gearbox was slight, and we were also quite unaware that the machine was blessed with butter-churn transmission. Twice we forgot how many times we had stamped on the "clutch pedal," and so found ourselves unexpectedly travelling in the direction of recession, and uttered some pretty terse comments anent clutch slip until reminded of the presence of said butter-churn.

However, these trifling potholes were soon overcome, a chit was signed saying we had taken delivery of the car in good condition, and we were free to sit in the seat of government and meditate. First impressions, which count for a lot, were entirely favourable. To begin with, you can see out. The bonnet is low, the seat just right, the adjustable steering column brings the wheel just where you want it, and the general placing of controls is

altogether admirable. In these days of high bonnets (usually concealing an engine which scarcely rises above chassis level), peering through ill-raked steering wheels and performing creditable acrobatic feats when endeavouring to reach the brake pedal, the rare sensation of actually being in control of the car was a change as welcome as it was novel.

Threading our way westwards towards the Kingston Bypass, the ease of handling and certainty of control were pleurably apparent. We had now made it up with gearbox and butter-churn and indeed were quite intrigued with their latent possibilities, although still entirely unconvinced of their superiority over good orthodox transmission, except for the indolent or fluffy-minded. Doubtless the simpleton who is unable to appreciate that it is necessary to declutch on coming to a standstill will for ever be with us; but should he (or she) be permitted to conduct a couple of tons of extremely lethal weapon at great speeds—indeed, be encouraged to do so by the provision of such mechanical ingenuities as are under review?

Once on the open road, the Daimler went up to 60 m.p.h. with absolute ease, and cruised happily at this speed on most economical throttle openings. Moreover, real oomph from this speed was forthcoming, reaching and holding 70 m.p.h. without any fuss at all. A slight "period" in the front suspension was noticed at about 68, resulting in rather violent steering judder, but this passed off at once when a higher or lower speed was reached. The speedometer gave the impression of being on the slow side, and a timed maximum of 75 m.p.h. would seem a fair estimate of all-out speed. At this velocity, as on ultimate speeds on the gears, there was distinct evidence of strenuous toil beneath the bonnet, the engine making somewhat agricultural noises and roaring a little. This occurred at about 33 m.p.h. on second and 50 m.p.h. on third, which gear seemed unnecessarily low and a rather higher ratio would have been preferred.

However, the road-holding, with the independent coil front suspension, is really most excellent and quite rapid cornering can safely be indulged in, the good vision and steering aiding not a little. In this connection it is worth recording that a large American limousine, containing two unlovely specimens of the Chosen Race,

piloted by a corpulent chauffeur of repellent aspect, with but a rudimentary knowledge of his car, cornering and road manners, was soundly beaten on the Kingston Bypass, only the agitation of his unprepossessing cargo eventually restraining him from determined attempts at hara-kiri at each roundabout.

After a call in Weybridge, a run to Bray for lunch and back followed, the supple ease of the car's going being much appreciated, especially after lunch. Indeed, heartened and uplifted by a Vosn e Roman e 1919 and a beaker of Delamain 1900, the Daimler seemed all that one could require in sybaritic transport, responding to one's mood, lounging along in a charmingly easy, comfortable and silent manner. Thus, one felt, would Roman emperors have travelled if they had had the knack.

Actual timed performance figures were a little disappointing, 0-50 taking 18 secs., 0-60 25 secs. and 50-70 in top 21 secs.; under favourable conditions a speedometer reading of just over 80 was obtained. The brakes were smooth and certain, though not very powerful, a good deal of pedal movement being necessary before they really began to bite. But mechanical faults were few and far between and readily forgiven when the respectable mileage of 61,000 was taken into consideration. The general condition of the car as a whole reflected the highest credit upon the Daimler Co. for building a very durable motor-car and upon the splendid upkeep afforded the car by Daimler Hire.

Only three criticisms really come to mind. First, the layout of the induction and exhaust systems; the former, with its single S.V. and multitude of sharp corners, being the shape usually drawn to show the enthusiastic amateur tuner exactly what not to do. Next, starting from cold was not good, a fair amount of jiggery-pokery with throttle and choke being necessary and the engine requiring some time to warm up, both faults being perhaps due to the bad induction pipe shape mentioned above. And, finally, why, oh why, in these days of advanced metallurgy must we still have cars built, as regards weight, on the lines of a "Waltzing Matilda"? B.M.W., Delahaye, Delage, Lancia and many others have shown that light construction and durability can go hand in hand. I promise I will buy the first good British car built on these lines after the war.

Anyway, a very pleasant motor-car and a very pleasant interlude.

EDITORIAL—continued from inside front cover

have not the slightest objection to announcement now of future policy. We think the Club was wise to close down for the duration of war, even though one of its most ardent members, G. L. Benbough, has raised funds for charity and given much pleasure to sick children by the continued use of his veterans. This being the case, we are all the more surprised by the

announcement of the proposed Victory Run, and we take the liberty of suggesting to the Club that it has launched a too-fantastic scheme in a moment of misguided patriotism. For the foregoing reasons we feel it should substitute the "Brighton" for the "Berlin"; perhaps reviving the latter project for some future anniversary of the next Armistice.

# Letters from Readers

Sir,

From time to time I have noticed in the pages of MOTOR SPORT discussions relating to the building of road "Specials" and have been specially interested in those based on the J.A.P. V-twin.

Recently I heard that an acquaintance wished to dispose of one of these engines, but only on condition that it was put to some interesting use. I called on him, and after three hours' "jawing" I was the owner of an 1,100-c.c. 1932 J.A.P. twin, which had been used and raced in a Morgan Aero till Hitler put an end to these things for a while.

The unit has been rebored, fitted with racing pistons and connecting rods, J.A.P. dirt-track valves, new guides, roller bearings, treble valve springs, etc.

I am now looking for a light sports chassis to install it in and hope to have an interesting road motor when finished (if it works!).

A friend has just purchased a 1935 Colmore Frasch, and though we haven't had time or gas to try it yet, we hope to bring it to life soon, as it will be used regularly on work of national importance.

If our friends' plans all materialise after this little trouble, you should be hearing again from this part of the world, with its two "Specials" under construction, a Frasch, blown Wolseley Hornet and tuned Morgan 4.4.

So until the happy days when they are in use again we'll just meet and talk of fun to come.

I am, Yours etc.,  
R. R. FRENCH.

Ilford, Essex.

\* \* \*

Sir,

I get myself 48 hours' leave from the 'burg in which I find myself stationed and figure the big city station bookstall may have reading matter more suitable to my way of thinking than the parish magazine, for which we stand in lines after pay parade, when one and all have read Saturday's news-sheet.

I treat myself to only "two fingers" neat, and when idly lighting the cigarette I quickly see a sporting-looking limey, his pan all lit up, make a dive for the stall. I give him the tap ankle, grab the last copy of MOTOR SPORT, get myself a corner seat in the express and my pan takes on the pleased-to-meet-you aspect. I notice the sporting guy reading the "Standard" by a torchlight in the corridor and grumbling to himself. I promise him I will mail my copy to him in a few months when I finish it; he appears to feel better, a little. (My booksellers inform me that at the outbreak of these hostilities MOTOR SPORT has become an early casualty. As I remind the punk in the corridor, everything comes to those who wait—even a coffin.)

All the dinners in MOTOR SPORT are like guest nights, but especially "Cars I

Have Owned," which is like the dinner the night the General comes.

Austin Seven, Hillman Minx, Singer "Le Mans," Daimler 15 D.H. coupé, "12/50" Alvis (my best love), 2½-litre S.S. Jaguar, Jowett, Standard Flying Twelve and Ford Ten in four years is a poacher's bag (to say nothing of a blood-red monoped mongrel, of which a one-year-old wartime production can nearly reach the pedals). The S.S. Jaguar, Standard and Ford are still in proud possession.

I am, Yours etc.,  
P. E. S. B.

Home Forces.

\* \* \*

Sir,

On re-reading some of the recent back numbers of your excellent publication I was rather surprised to read in Mr. (Clerical) Clutton's article, "Cars I Have Owned," that his 3-litre Bentley had not much performance. This rather surprised me as, for an everyday car of undoubted reliability, 90 m.p.h. or thereabouts seems to me quite good.

The fact that he states: "Unless one was feeling really in good form the driving was rather a labour," makes me think that Mr. Clutton should give up vintage motoring, as to my mind the whole joy of the vintage car is the fact that the driver is in such close communication with the car in general that the only time that driving becomes a labour is when the car itself is labouring; then, I agree, things become very miserable.

I have done something over 100,000 miles of old-school Bentley motoring in both 3 and 4½-litre. My Bentleys have been used all and every day for business motoring in the City and the suburbs as well as for long runs—strangely enough, the driving of same has never proved a labour, even when I have been suffering from 'flu, tonsillitis or other seasonal complaints.

One "4½," on which I have done 65,000 miles, has been on the road since the commencement of 1937 and is still being used for business purposes, although the mileage allowed is meagre enough—however, the few runs I have in her always prove to be a tonic and not a labour.

I am, Yours etc.,  
C. J. L. MERTENS.

Ruislip,  
Middlesex.

\* \* \*

Sir,

I have always regretted that MOTOR SPORT discontinued its interest in motor-cycling. I realise that it would be impossible to cover all branches, but reports on the International Grands Prix, with their attendant development in design, would have made interesting reading.

For myself, although I gave up competing in motor-cycle events in 1928, I

have kept in touch with the improvements made in road-racing machines up to the present, and have noted with apprehension from a patriotic, and with interest from a technical, viewpoint the perseverance with which the Continental racing departments perfected their unorthodox designs until they very definitely had the legs of us in the 500-c.c. class.

Although we had brought the "pneumatic-drill" type of engine to an unprecedented degree of perfection, our manufacturers have, in the main, always seemed loath to break away from the stereotyped. There were, of course, exceptions: the V4, water-cooled, supercharged A.J.S., for instance, was on the heels of the fastest Continental challenger and, given a season of development, might well have given us superiority once more. It should be borne in mind that this machine was the first to lap the Ulster course at 100 m.p.h. and was only put out by a steering defect.

The following few results will show how thoroughly we had, by 1939, lost our coveted omnipotence in motor-cycle racing:—

*Swedish Grand Prix.*—1st, Gilera; 2nd, Gilera; 3rd, B.M.W.; 4th, Norton. Speed: 96.10 m.p.h. Fastest lap: Meier (B.M.W.), 100.87 m.p.h.

*Grand Prix of Europe.*—1st, B.M.W.; 2nd, Gilera; 3rd, B.M.W.; 4th, F.-N. Speed: 94.95 m.p.h. Fastest lap: Meier (B.M.W.), 100.63 m.p.h.

*Senior T.T.*—1st, B.M.W.; 2nd, B.M.W.; 3rd, Norton. Speed: 89.38 m.p.h. Fastest lap: Meier (B.M.W.), 90.75 m.p.h.

*Ulster Grand Prix.*—1st, Gilera; 2nd, Norton; 3rd, Velocette. Speed: 97.85 m.p.h. Fastest lap: Serafini (Gilera), 100.03 m.p.h.

*German Grand Prix.*—1st, Gilera; 2nd, B.M.W.; 3rd, B.M.W. Speed: 87.61 m.p.h.

In the 250 and 350-c.c. classes we were well on the way to being beaten up by D.K.W., Benelli and Guzzi machines. Let us hope that when peace returns we may forget the single-cylinder fetish, which still smacks of 1914; we have the designers, constructors, tuners, and riders.

Let us not again be overcome by the national lethargy which lost us our position in sports car and Grand Prix car racing and the respect of Continental motor sportsmen. Owing to the return to the saddle of many who find that the present circumstances make it desirable, and the fact that hundreds in H.M. Forces have had to take up motor-cycling, might I suggest that you once more open your columns to items of interest in this connection.

I am, Yours etc.,  
H. L. BIGGS.

Enfield,  
Middlesex.

[We have often contemplated giving adequate space to motor-cycle matters, but

## LETTERS FROM READERS—continued

the press of car material has made it impracticable. Now that there is still less space the problem remains. However, the R.A.C. having banned car competitions, while Army-approved motor-cycle events are frequent and well supported, perhaps something more should be done for the two-wheeler fraternity and we will endeavour to mould future plans accordingly.—Ed.]

\* \* \*

Sir,

The Vintage S.C.C., by its careful definitions of "sports," "super-sports" and "racing" cars, did its best to encourage the "impecunious amateur," and, I think, attracted a considerable number of them. Yet it was very seldom that a 750-c.c. class in a speed event had sufficient entries to be run as a class on its own. (These events were open to both Vintage and modern cars.)

Most of the impecunious ran cars of 1½-litres or more, for the very good reason, I think, that for a given expenditure more fun can be had with the larger car. A 750-c.c. cannot be made to go sufficiently fast to be exciting without becoming unreliable unless a lot of money is spent upon it. If this view is correct, then I do not think the prospects for Class I are good.

I quite agree with Mr. Lowrey that it would be easier to collect Class I or J records than the larger classes; but record-breaking is an expensive pastime anyway, and even in Class I beyond the scope of the "impecunious amateur."

You may remember that I was Competitions Secretary of the V.S.C.C. up to the outbreak of war, but the foregoing are, of course, only my personal views.

Changing the subject, your Editorial asks if the V.S.C.C. proposes to hold road events for pre-1914 cars after this war. Again only a personal view, but I have no doubt that the answer will be "Yes"!

I am, Yours etc.,  
H. P. BOWLER.

Rickmansworth,  
Herts.

[Other notable clubs which sought to help the amateur in the manner Mr. Bowler mentions were the Kent and Sussex L.C.C. at Lewes and the Brighton and Hove M.C. at Brighton.—Ed.]

\* \* \*

Sir,

The R.A.C. has been asked by the Welfare Department of the War Office to find 200 London car owners who will give one night a week to assist sailors, soldiers and airmen of our own and the Allied Forces passing through London.

For those arriving late at night accommodation has to be found in one or other of the big Service hostels now available. In the majority of cases the men are strangers to London, and if turned loose in the "black-out" without a guide would inevitably lose their way. Cars are wanted, therefore, to convey the men to their resting-place for the night. The nights when help is most needed are Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The hours of duty are approximately between 9 p.m. and 1.30 a.m., and petrol coupons will be provided.

Will any motorist who is prepared to assist with this most essential work please communicate with the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall, S.W.1 (Whitehall 2345), stating on which night he or she is prepared to serve, the make and horse-power of the car (large cars are particularly useful), and home and business telephone numbers?

I am, Yours etc.,  
J. SEALY CLARKE,  
Chairman,  
Royal Automobile Club.

Pall Mall.

\* \* \*

Sir,

As no doubt you are well aware, the old 2-seater Jowetts, pre-1926, had the following excellent features:—

High geared steering and fine lock; most surprising cornering (they would slide happily on a dry road, given a spot of dust), but, nevertheless, good springing for rough going; a right-hand stub gear lever, excellently placed by the driver's thigh; a clutch which would stand endless slipping, although most fierce (asbestos rope, or some such material, on a steel cone); useful maintained speed (mine, which I could not afford to keep in good fettle, was all out at 43 m.p.h., but would maintain 38-39 m.p.h. (speedo) indefinitely, she seemed to cruise faster than the small modern car is usually driven); 45-50 m.p.g. was usual, and on one occasion from Edinburgh to Manchester 63 m.p.g. with due use of neutral; unbelievable pulling power at low r.p.m., which gave, with the equally unbelievable rear wheel adhesion, an amusingly slow and relentless climb on the easier trials-type hills; good ground clearance; 4.5 to 1 top ratio and light weight—they had all body and no unnecessary gadgets and weighed 9 cwt., I believe; everything was firmly fixed, rattles rarely developing; there was a fold-forward screen and the hood could be raised and lowered by the driver while in motion; the radiator was lower than in later models; the body was occasionally painted racing green.

The engine lay between the chassis side members and had to be rotated on its long axis, or removed, for decarbonisation.

I am no mechanic, but I believe that the valve guides were integral with the cylinder and the cylinder head was not detachable. These last points were most annoying, but otherwise everything was most accessible.

It has always been a puzzle to me to know why the impecunious make so little use of these cars. Probably, I suppose, because they are rare and ugly.

I have a catalogue, not by me here, in which the makers boast of most of the points I mention and give details of ground clearance, etc. (and even state the depth of water fordable).

I am, Yours etc.,  
T. S. S.

Grimsby,  
Lincs.

\* \* \*

Sir,

Regarding this H.R.G. battle, I feel I must write to back up Mr. Gandhi. Although apparently wrong on certain

Continued on page 481

# READERS' SALES AND WANTS

To meet the repeated demands for something on the lines of the old Spare Parts Announcements, we have instituted a system of inexpensive advertisements. Each announcement must be limited to **twelve** words, plus the advertiser's sufficient postal address, and the charge will be 1s. 6d. per announcement, payable at time of posting. The system will be governed by the following rules:—

(1) Each announcement to cost 1s. 6d. and be limited to twelve words and the advertiser's address. Box Numbers cannot be used.

(2) The publishers accept no responsibility for loss of advertisements, non-publication, late publication, or incorrect wording, but will endeavour to insert announcements in the next issue, if posted within eight days of the publication of the previous issue.

(3) No advertiser may submit more than **two** announcements per issue and each must apply to a separate article. Only spares for sale, spares or cars wanted, or **really cheap** cars for sale, should be announced. Prices should normally be quoted.

(4) The proprietors of MOTOR SPORT offer this scheme for the mutual benefit of enthusiasts and can take no responsibility of any sort whatsoever. All transactions must be made to the published addresses and no correspondence can be entered into in respect of announcements, transactions or any other matters arising from the scheme.

(5) Announcements should be sent within eight days of the publication of the current issue of MOTOR SPORT, accompanied by stamps or crossed postal orders to the required amount. Cheques or coin cannot be accepted.

## WANTED

SALMSON Grand Prix or SAN SEBASTIAN, any date, wanted by private owner. 212, Victoria Road, Thorpe Bay, Essex.

BROOKLANDS Riley or similar bodywork, any condition. Small Bugatti radiator. H. R. Ecurie, 30, Wollaton Vale, Beeston, Notts.

M.G. MIDGET P.A. or P.B. engine. Stark, Derby. 162, Swarkestone Road, Chellaston, Derby.

SIATA o.h.v. head wanted for Fiat "500." Pollard, Goffs Oak, Cheshunt, Herts.

PAIR 16" wheels with 42 mm. hubs. Little, 41, Bourne End Road, Northwood, Middlesex.

## FOR SALE

3-Litre BENTLEY spares. 23, Greenleaf Road, E.17. Larks. 1805.

Spares Section,  
**MOTOR SPORT,**  
21, CITY ROAD,  
LONDON, E.C.1

## CARS I HAVE OWNED

[In this contribution to the series B. Webb-Ware describes the cars in which he has covered 150,000 miles in the last ten years ; he used to know Tom Moore, late owner of this paper, in the days when he drove a 3-litre Bentley in the I.O.M.—Ed.]

**A**LTHOUGH my mechanical knowledge was rather limited at the time, I can claim fairly early initiation into active motoring, even though I am not including the family two-cylinder 1908 Swift, in which I first took the air. In the early part of the last war, at the ripe age of about eight, I used—quite illegally—to sit on the parental knee and steer the 1913 12-h.p. Rover and the 1914 "11.9" Arrol-Johnson, which comprised the family stable at that date. As a matter of fact, the driving of these two cars was rather a masterpiece of co-operation, because, although I was still far too short to reach the pedals, I used to change gear on the hefty right-hand gate change on the word "Go" at the same time as the other half of the combination did some hearty de-clutching.

Following the war, the Arrol-Johnson was sold at a slightly higher price than its original cost five years before, but the Rover continued to give good service until it was replaced after ten years of useful existence by a "10/15" Fiat. This in turn gave place to a whole covey of Austins, but in the meanwhile I had launched out on my own account.

In 1927 I looked round—never having even sat on a motor-cycle—for what seemed to be a really sporting machine and settled on a T.T. Scott "Flying Squirrel," a year after the type had first come out. I enjoyed the "Squirrel" for two years until a heavy crash terminated my motor-cycling career. Then, in 1931, I really began motoring.

Starting with an "M"(?)-type M.G. Midget with a boat body, I ran through a series of three M.G. Midgets before getting on to bigger stuff. The first was a nice little job that had only done about 4,000 miles. My main criticism of it was that when you put the hood up your progress turned into a kind of inverted sack race. That is to say, you were almost blind, unless you poked your head out of the side into the wide open spaces beyond. The gear change, via a gear lever with several kinks in it, took some knowing. The cable brakes on this car were not too brilliant, and the same could also be said very literally of the lights; but the engine and chassis gave me no trouble, even though, in an excess of enthusiasm, I found an excuse to strip some part of it and over-lubricate it at least once daily.

At the end of 1931 I was fortunate in buying from the then Earl of March his Jarvis-bodied "Special" M.G. Midget. I don't know how many people still remember these delightful little cars, but I for one still treasure a road-test of it from *MOTOR SPORT* of 1932. The Jarvis body was a first-rate job, on the lines of a miniature international 1½-litre Aston-Martin tourer and, despite the previous criticisms of brakes and lamps, I drove this car very happily till I fell heavily for "The Autocar" test of the original "J.2"-type M.G. Midget. Then followed some months of bank-account wangling,

until I finally became possessed of one in February, 1933. At the time I was living in Newcastle, and we ran that car in very efficiently in the space of four trips down the North Road to Ely on four successive week-ends. Personally, I think that the two-bearing engines of this design have been somewhat maligned. I ran the "J.2" for some 28,000 miles in 18 months, and when I finally parted with it the next owner was so decent as to write to me and congratulate me on its condition. Despite their reputation to blow up, it never gave any serious mechanical trouble once the valve guides had been shortened—sticking valve guides being, I fancy, a familiar trouble with early models of this type—and it was using little oil up to the last. The only faint criticisms I had were that the brakes were non-existent when really wet and that, although it was claimed to be an 80-m.p.h. car, nothing would induce more than 74 m.p.h. out of it. In passing, I would say that this has been my experience all along. The original "M"-type M.G. Midgets, for which people would glibly claim 70, never gave me more than 65, and I have always found that my cars were some 5 to 10 m.p.h. slower than the speeds casually bandied about for them in conversation. This does not mean that the "J.2" was not as nippy from point to point as practically anything I have driven and, looking back, I think I got more genuine enjoyment from it than from any other car.

Coming down the North Road one day in 1934 I was overtaken by two Lancias in rapid succession. I thought at first from their progress that they must have the narrow V8 engines in them, but on finding that these "Augustas" were merely powered by four-cylinder units of a bare 1,200 c.c., and furthermore cost about £445, I dismissed them contemptuously from my mind.

Two weeks later I walked into Kevill, Davies and March, Ltd., in Berkeley Street, and bought one, and I never regretted it. Although my car had a flat-out maximum speed of about 65, it would travel indefinitely at 60, and it never let me down on the road in 45,000 miles. The snags were a complete inability to retain the water pump gland packing for more than 1,000 miles, a hobby of breaking rear shock-absorber arms, and, latterly, an exasperating habit of the starter pinion throwing itself out of mesh. The water pump was cured by a lovely bit of work in the way of a special gland turned out for me by Booth & Croft during the course of one night. I wish I could remember the name of the chap who did it, as he was a first-rate engineer and I have often wanted to get in touch with him and ask what was the ultimate fate of that hand-built Frazer-Nash-type "Special" which was gradually taking shape upstairs in the Mews behind Harrods and was destined, I think, to have an elderly, but potentially extravagantly potent, supercharged 1½-litre Miller engine of Eldridge's installed in it.

1936 found me yearning for an open car again. I was by then doing a job of work which had called for an enclosed wagon for all-the-year travelling, hence the Lancia "Augusta" saloon, but I quite erroneously argued that you could keep two cars for the price of one (*cf.* "Two can live as cheaply as one") and went out into the market again. I nearly fell for a 1½-litre Aston-Martin of 1934 vintage, and, of course, ever since have wished I had bought it, just to see what it was like. Instead, I was persuaded by a friend of mine, an arch-Frazer-Nash enthusiast, to invest in a 1934 T.T. Replica Frazer-Nash with Meadows twin-carburettor engine. I loved that 'Nash—on occasions. On the whole, though, I am inclined to be a heretic and agree with a past article of John Bolster's, in which he said that the Frazer-Nash by then had already lost its point. My own was infernally heavy to handle on all the controls and the front Hartfords had to be dead hard to avoid jumping sideways on a rough corner taken at speed; but all the same there was a fascination in the louvred bonnet, the sight of both front wings and that instantaneous dog-change—when once you knew that you *must* put pressure on the lever before kicking the clutch if you were ever going to pull a dog out of mesh—and the feeling that wherever you slid it was just about impossible to turn it over, not to mention the metallic clanging of the exhaust at about 3,500 r.p.m.

I drove the Frazer-Nash out to Budapest that summer and through seven European countries in the course of a fortnight, including over the Glockner and the Furke and Grimsel Passes. Going up the Autobahn out of Munich we kept the rev. counter at 3,000 r.p.m., which, with my high top, represented 65 m.p.h. After half an hour we had covered 32 miles. That is what I call making an average. . . . On another occasion on that trip we got all mixed up with Hitler's retinue on the way up to Berchtesgarden, Hitler himself included; but that is another story, as also the occasion when an Austrian cyclist wobbled across the road in front of us and I had to turn the 'Nash completely round at 65. We pushed the cyclist into the ditch with the tail of the car, sliding backwards down the road at about 20. And we were both so surprised that all I could do was to shake hands with him and say, "Wie gehts." He got on his bike and rode on. I backed the 'Nash round and went on to Vienna. That proved that you really had to try to turn it over. . . .

All the same, on my frequent journeys in London it was pretty average hell, and as the opportunities for using it for long journeys on the open road got less and less I sold her, after a long search for a purchaser, to a bricklayer's labourer, who walked in one day with the cash price in pound notes in a bag under his arm and took delivery on the spot. While I had the 'Nash I burnt out the dynamo at Graz, used an inordinate amount of oil (although nominally the engine had been

## CARS I HAVE OWNED—continued

reconditioned) and bust the top ratio chain twice. Each time the chain fell into the under shield and we went on quite blithely in third for the rest of the journey. I also struggled permanently with the S.U. petrol pump until in desperation we took the whole thing to pieces outside Innsbruck and reassembled it from first principles. It was not a good 'Nash, but it was the only car in which I have done 100 miles in this country in under two hours, and sometimes, despite its faults, it was sheer joy. Its normal maximum was 78, and I have done 45 on it in reverse.

The Lancia lasted for a few more months only; the starting difficulties got me down completely, even though the engine refused to use oil and the greatest wear in any cylinder was under 4 thou. Seeing a description of the then new Type 329 B.M.W. at the Berlin Show of early 1937, I ordered one through Isleworth. I liked this motor very well from a handling point of view, and although it virtually had the Type 45 engine with twin Solex carburetters, it would get up to 70 very rapidly. I don't think, though, that the steering was quite in the same class as that of the "Augusta," and the gear change certainly wasn't. The coupé body was the best I have ever had, beautifully solid and free from rattles; but, all the same, the whole car was dogged by an irritating series of small ailments. The door locks went west. The petrol gauge went west. So did the thermostatically-operated radiator shutters and the radiator itself got choked, and so on through a series of other little faults, until the engine began to overheat badly

and ultimately I had to get Laystall's to re-metal the con-rods at a bare 18,000 miles. I still think that these were first-rate cars, but possibly at that time the Hun was already building up his vast reserves for the Luftwaffe and some of the stuff going into his domestic cars was just not quite up to scratch. Anyhow, my opinion of the B.M.W. was that the engine was designed to such fine limits of lightness that it had to be free to the "nth" degree to keep really satisfactory. Although I had the B.M.W. up to 83 on one occasion with a following wind, I would put the maximum at 75, with a comfortable cruising speed of 65-70 m.p.h.

If you exclude a third-hand 1938 Hillman Minx, a most adequate and exasperatingly uninteresting vehicle, which I have just sold after a summer's use, the only other car I have possessed has been my present 1939 Rover 16 coupé. I just cannot say why I like that Rover so well, but there is some attraction about it you just cannot define. It is no speed-wagon, despite a rate of over 80 estimated by an excessively optimistic speedometer. Although the coupling of the front shock absorbers helps its handling on a corner, its best friend could not say that it has the road-holding of either the Lancia or the B.M.W., and yet, for general purposes, I would rather drive the Rover than any of them. Just before the war I drove down from the north of Scotland by myself, a distance of rather more than 600 miles, in two days, and I know I felt fresher at the end than I would in any of the others.

Amongst other cars I have tried was an amazing Coventry Climax - engined

Triumph Ten tourer of 1937 vintage, which took us all over Austria in 1937 and well up into the north of Scandinavia in 1938. A heavy and superficially uninspiring motor, it had a remarkable habit of getting along in a hurry and, except for stripping the thread of the clearance-adjusting nipple of one push rod, never gave us any trouble in 5,000 arduous Continental miles. I am deliberately excluding one hectic night travelling up through heavy rain from Stockholm into the interior of Sweden, when the battery went flat through no fault of the motor's and I stood on my head under the scuttle hammering the petrol pump with the "Europa Touring Guide" in order to get along in quarter-mile bursts. It had one feature that appealed to me a lot in the twin S.U. carburetters, of which the big horizontal down draught unit only cut in under the action of an ingenious linkage at about three-quarters throttle, giving most perceptible urge with economy. Almost an application of the Mercedes blower principle to an unblown car.

I am afraid that perhaps this description sounds pretty tame compared with the experiences of other people who have taken an active part in trials driving and racing. All the same, it represents nearly 150,000 miles of intensive touring in about eight years and will, I hope, call out other reminiscences under the "Cars I Have Owned" heading, which personally I have enjoyed tremendously from the start. It is too early to say what will replace the Rover, but if Bentley or Lagonda could be induced to produce a 2-litre after the present unpleasantness—oh, boy!

## STOP PRESS

### LABELS

Stuart-Wilton has suggested that it might be a good idea for enthusiasts to display windscreen labels on their cars so that their enthusiasm may not be hidden by ownership of a closed car or the wearing of gent's natties instead of soiled flannels or racing overalls. It seems that some four years ago Wilton helped form the Motor Racing Club, to whose members windscreen transfers, showing an E.R.A.-like racing car, were issued. The B.R.D.C. frowned on the scheme, feeling that the transfers might well bring the Sport into disfavour, the only requirement for membership of the Club which issued them being attendance at a race meeting or speed trial. Now that the B.R.D.C. is dormant, Wilton would like to see the scheme revived and announces that transfers are available at 1/- each from Strand and Hunter, 11, Regent Street, W.C.1. Although we believe that a certain fertiliser manufacturer noted for his fast M.G. has ordered twelve such transfers, we must side with the B.R.D.C. in the opinion it expressed about this matter in 1938. Motoring sport is frowned on sufficiently already, and every care must be taken that thoughtless or harmful people do not have opportunity to bring it into greater disfavour. Again, is it

always convenient to be recognised as an enthusiast whom any fellow-enthusiast is invited to lure into motor-talk at any hour of the night or day? Keen as we are, we do not think that it is. At least restrict the issue of transfers to those who belonged to a reputable club at the outbreak of war, and let them signify no more than a club badge.

\* \* \*

### 750 CLUB MEETING

The 750 Club held yet another very enjoyable meeting on November 9th at the Osterley Hotel on the Great West Road, quite near to the Metropolis. Lunch was partaken of and motor-cars discussed. Those who graced the meeting with their presence included Laurence Pomeroy (D.K.W.); Bunny Tubbs (D.K.W.); Jesty, the ex-C.U.A.C. secretary; Maguire, the present C.U.A.C. secretary, who came on a motor-cycle; Lieut. Moon (Austin "Nippy"); Birkett ("Ulster" Austin); C. M. Dunn (Type 45 B.M.W.); Ansty and Clark ("Ulster" Austin); H. L. Biggs (Fiat "500"); Laurence ("P" M.G.); Harmer ("J2" M.G.); Gilbert (Austin Seven); George Kipps ("105" Talbot); Ballamy, in one of his Fords; Mallock; P. H. Hunter,

who came by train; Capon (Riley); Frost (unblown "Ulster" Austin); Denis Jenkinson (solo Norton); and Miss Teddy Worthington, in her twin o.h.c. Anzani Frazer-Nash, who came up rapidly from Farnborough, bringing Boddy and Lush, all just back from some extensive motoring commencing in the early hours. Just before black-out the party broke up, many members going off communally in search of tea. It is all scheduled to happen again on December 7th at the same venue. Hon. secretary, S. H. Capon, 159, Upper Tulse Hill, London, S.W.

\* \* \*

### OBITUARY

We deeply regret to learn that Sqd.-Lr. Richard Bickford, D.F.C., was killed in action recently. Bickford spent some profitable time in America with his saxophone, but he was a close friend of many of our leading racing men. In particular, he knew Dick Seaman extremely well and, in fact, flew adventurously to Monaco with him in 1935. He also introduced George Monkhouse to motor racing. His own car was an open Lancia "Lambda," which he used regu-

Continued on page 481

LETTERS FROM READERS—continued from page 478

points, I think he feels as I do—that is to say, he too thinks the H.R.G. somewhat out of date. Anyone who has examined one of these cars can hardly fail to remark on the crude workmanship and finish in many parts. Several praiseworthy efforts have been made in the past to produce a potent British sports car of small size, but I do feel that the manufacturers have not shown sufficient imagination and realisation of what a modern sports car should be like.

Many people rave about the T-type M.G., but I must say that they are easily satisfied. The M.G. may hold the road fairly well, but so does a vintage job. After a Continental sports car, the steering of an M.G., for one thing, leaves much to be desired. The springing is also hard and out of date. Can't we break away from these pseudo sports cars and really produce a pukka job?

Having made all these remarks, readers may perhaps be wondering what car I drive. The answer is a Lancia Aprilia.

Here you have a 12-h.p. full 5-seater saloon which will beat up practically every small so-called sports car on the road. A genuine stop-watch 80 m.p.h. and 30 m.p.g. into the bargain. The acceleration is better than that of a T-type M.G., and the number of times I have left an M.G. at traffic lights and proved this is legion. The expression on the other driver's face never fails to amuse me.

To stop being provocative and to sum up then, if the Italians can produce a car like the Aprilia, which is not supposed to be a sports car, surely after the war our own manufacturers can produce something better than the T-type M.G. or the H.R.G.

As "stop press," let me just add that the latest type Aprilia (I believe there is one in this country) will do a genuine 90 m.p.h., so let's get a move on with the designs for a cheap British car to compete with this, with modern suspension like the Lancia, and modern construction as well.

I am, Yours etc.,  
R.A.F. B. J. LANE, S/Lt.

Sir,

One small error has crept into your interesting review of the World's Hour Record published in your October issue. The twelve-cylinder Sunbeam which held the record from 1913 until 1924 had a cylinder capacity of 9,048 c.c. (not 8,207 c.c. as stated).

This car has a side-valve V12 engine of 80 x 150 mm., mounted in what was stated to be an ordinary 25/30-h.p. Sunbeam chassis frame. The engine was of a type originally designed for use in aeroplanes.

It is interesting to note that the car had to stop for a change of tyres on its 42nd lap, but in spite of this handicap Chassagne managed to cover over 107 miles in the hour. His fastest lap was his second, which was covered at the very creditable speed of 117 m.p.h.

It was in an attempt to beat the Sunbeam's record that Percy Lambert met his death. Tyres were the limiting factor, and after 20 laps at an average speed of 110 m.p.h. one of the Talbot's rear covers burst. It seems that after a series of hectic swerves the car went over the top of the Members' Banking.

Chassagne and the twelve-cylinder Sunbeam appear, from the table you published, to have held the Hour Record for a longer period than any of the other holders.

In 1914 the Sunbeam made further attempts on World's Records and covered a flying mile at Brooklands at 120.73 m.p.h. and five miles at 114 m.p.h.

Since these record-breaking runs before the last war I cannot recall that this machine was ever seen or heard of again. It seems odd that such a successful car should have disappeared without a trace. Perhaps the readers of MOTOR SPORT can throw some light on its fate.

I am, Yours etc.,  
ANTHONY S. HEAL.  
Denham,  
Bucks.

[See "We Hear" column for admission of further mistakes.—Ed.]

STOP PRESS—continued from page 480

larly all the year round, affecting a heavy coat and huge fur gloves in the winter. He joined the R.A.F.V.R. about six years ago and gained the D.F.C. early in the war. He took a close interest in motoring journalism and was no mean journalist himself. To his many friends we offer our heartfelt sympathy. Let us, when victory is achieved, do something worthwhile in the memory of the many sporting motorists who will have seen the final chequered flag.

\* \* \*

ODD PIECES

Keith Farquharson, 2, Trevor Road, Winton, Eccles, Lancs., would like to

meet a fellow-enthusiast in his area and to help with work on thoroughbred cars; also to hear of a s.v. Aston-Martin. We know of a T.T. Replica, four-cylinder o.h.c. Frazer-Nash for sale in the West, for around £110. One of the 500 Mile Race Talbots is still in regular hard service. A 1921 Singer Ten 2-seater, rumoured in show-room condition, was for sale in London recently. Symonds has a blown "Grasshopper" Austin Seven.

\* \* \*

If anyone has one of Harold Nockolds's original drawings of the Birkin single-seater Bentley, entitled "Lap Record," Peter Robertson-Rodger would like to hear about it.

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1932<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> LAGONDA 2-litre supercharged 2-door Weyman Saloon. Many extras, super condition mechanically and appearance; 20 m.p.g.; 90 m.p.h.; room wanted; best offer. "Tolcarne," Chester Road, Bacons End, Coleshill, Warwickshire.

WANTED

SALMSON G.P. or San Sebastian "10/20," any date (1930 preferred), any condition, wanted for cash by private owner. 212, Victoria Road, Thorpe Bay, Essex.

BROOKLANDS Riley Nine, must be in fair condition. Box No. 102, c/o MOTOR SPORT, 21, City Road, E.C.1.

ANY or all of the following are urgently required:  
(1) A cylinder liner for a 1934 "Standard" model 1½-litre Aston-Martin. Failing this, a complete block, provided the cost be not exorbitant and the condition fair.

(2) Laystall racing crankshaft, complete with con-rods and main bearings for a post-1930 Riley 1,100-c.c. engine. Must be in reasonable order.

(3) Pair of aero-screens.  
G. Burton, "Pen-y-Bryn," Whittington, near Oswestry, Salop.

"GRASSHOPPER" Austin or trials conversion, blown/unblown, with trials ratios, high ground clearance. Clarke, 15, York Hill, S.E.27.

K3 MAGNETTE, R or Q type M.G., also super-charger for T-type M.G. Bourne, Roche Hill, Rochdale.

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Spares: Having taken over entire stock of Vadum Co., Salmson Specialists, we can supply new or good secondhand replacements for most models from our comprehensive stock.

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We wish to thank our large clientele of Bentley and Rolls Royce owners who have supported us so wonderfully since the War, but regret to inform them that owing to Government requirements no further repairs to private cars can be undertaken by us for the duration of the War.

# A SELECTION OF MOTOR SPORT ROAD TESTS THAT HAVE APPEARED IN PAST ISSUES

If you do not see the road test that you require write us a letter. We may have it in stock, but not published below.

Make of Car	Issue	Make of Car	Issue	Make of Car	Issue
A.B.C. 11 h.p. 2-cyl., 2-seater.....	Feb. 1926	DARRACQ 12.32 h.p., Weymann saloon .....	Sept. 1924	O.M. 6-cyl., 2-litre, 4-seater.....	Oct.-Nov. 1928
A.C. 2-litre, short-chassis, 15.7 h.p. 2-seater .....	July 1936	Delage 14 h.p., 2-litre, 2-3-seater...	June 1927	PACKARD V12-cyl. 57 h.p. coupe...	Feb. 1934
A.C. 2-litre, 16.40 h.p., 3-seater.....	Oct. 1927	Delage 8-cyl., sports saloon.....	April 1930	Peugeot "201" 4-cyl., 1.122 c.c. saloon .....	Sept. 1931
A.C. 2-litre, 16.66 h.p., 2-seater.....	March 1926	Delage D.8 120, drophead coupe.....	May 1938	RAILTON Terraplane 4-seater.....	Oct. 1934
A.C. 2-litre, 16.66 h.p., 4-seater.....	June 1934	Delahaye 3.5-litre "Coupe des Alps" drophead coupe.....	Aug. 1936	Railton Light Sports tourer.....	Dec. 1935
A.C. "Ace" 16/80 h.p.....	July 1937	Delahaye 3½-litre drophead coupe...	Dec. 1937	Railton Cobham 28.8 h.p. saloon...	Sept. 1938
Alfa Romeo, 1½-litre supercharged 6-cyl. Charles 2-seater (1929).....	March 1934	D.K.W. "Special" saloon.....	Feb. 1938	Riley Nine "Monaco-Special," two-carb. saloon .....	March 1931
Alfa-Romeo 1½-litre supercharged 8-cyl. "Zagato" 2-seater (1932) .....	July 1934	ESSEX Terraplane 8-cyl. 4-seater... ..	Sept. 1935	Riley Nine, 4-seater.....	June 1931
Alfa-Romeo 2.3-litre supercharged 8-cyl. "Zagato" 2-seater (1933) .....	Aug. 1936	Excelsior 5½-litre, 6-cyl., super-sports test chassis .....	Sept. 1927	Riley 16 h.p., Big-four Kestrel saloon .....	June 1938
Alfa-Romeo 2.3-litre supercharged 8-cyl. 4-seater (1931) .....	Aug. 1932	FIAT 20.70 h.p., 6-cyl., 2-4-seater... ..	April 1933	SINGER 1½-litre, 6-cyl., Le Mans 2-seater .....	March 1935
Alvis 11.9 h.p., 4-cyl., "Firefly" saloon .....	Feb. 1933	Fiat "Balilla" saloon.....	May 1934	Singer Nine, 4-seater .....	March 1933
Alvis 4-cyl., 12.60 h.p., 2-seater.....	July 1931	Fiat "Ardita" 17 h.p., 4-cyl., saloon .....	Feb. 1934	Squire 1½-litre, 4-cyl., 2-seater .....	Aug. 1935
Alvis 6-cyl., "Silver Eagle" 4-seater coupe (1929) .....	Aug. 1931	Fiat "Balilla" 10 h.p., 2-seater.....	Jan. 1935	S.S. I special-bodied 2-seater (1933) .....	Feb. 1934
Alvis 6-cyl., "Silver Eagle" 4-seater	June 1930	Fiat 6 h.p., Type 500, coupe.....	March 1937	S.S. I coupe .....	June 1933
Alvis 3½-litre saloon.....	Feb. 1936	Frazer-Nash 6-cyl., 1½-litre (Blackburn) 2-seater .....	July 1933	Steyr Type XII, 14.35 h.p., Weymann saloon.....	Aug.-Sept. 1928
Alvis Speed Twenty Vanden Plas saloon .....	Feb. 1935	Frazer-Nash 4-cyl., 1½-litre T.T. Replica push-rod o.h.v. 2-3-str....	Nov. 1931	Stutz "Black Hawk" supercharged 4-seater .....	Jan. 1930
Alvis Speed Twenty Charlesworth saloon .....	Feb. 1934	INVICTA 4½-litre low chassis, 4-str. Invicta 4½-litre Weymann saloon...	March 1931 June 1929	Stutz 5-litre, 8-cyl., 4-seater.....	Dec. 1927
Alvis Speed Twenty 4-seater.....	June 1932	Invicta 4½-litre saloon.....	Dec. 1929	Sunbeam 3-litre 6-cyl., (twin o.h.c.) fabric saloon .....	Nov. 1927
Alvis 12/70 4-door saloon.....	July 1938	Isotta-Fraschini 45 h.p., 4-seater... ..	Oct. 1926	Sunbeam 6-cyl., 21 h.p., (push-rod) Speed Six saloon .....	Dec. 1933
Ansaldo 2-litre, 4-cyl., o.h.c., 4-str....	Sept. 1924	LAGONDA 2-litre, 4-cyl., twin o.h.c. 4-seater .....	Jan.-Feb. 1928	TALBOT "90" Brooklands-bodied 2-4-seater .....	April 1931
Armstrong-Siddeley 20 h.p., 6-cyl. 4-seater .....	July 1933	Lagonda 2-litre, 4-cyl., twin o.h.c. supercharged 4-seater .....	Oct. 1930	Talbot "105" sports saloon .....	April 1934
Aston-Martin Mark II, 11.9 h.p., 2-4-seater .....	Jan. 1935	Lagonda 4½-litre, 4-seater .....	May 1936	Talbot 3½-litre saloon .....	March 1936
Aston-Martin Ulster 11.9 h.p., T.T. 2-seater .....	Oct. 1935	Lagonda 4½-litre Rapide 4-seater... ..	May 1935	Talbot Ten "Rally" 4-str.....	Oct.-Nov. 1936
Aston-Martin Le Mans 11.9 h.p., 2-4-seater .....	June 1933	Lagonda 4½-litre, 4-seater .....	Jan. 1934	Talbot "105" Vanden Plas 4-str....	Nov. 1932
Aston-Martin International 11.9 h.p., 4-seater .....	Aug. 1932	Lagonda Rapier 10 h.p., 4-seater... ..	Sept. 1934	Talbot "90" 4-seater.....	Nov. 1930
Aston-Martin T.T., 11.9 h.p., racing 2-seater .....	Dec. 1931	Lagonda 16.80 h.p., 6-cyl., 4-seater .....	Jan. 1933	Talbot Ten sports coupe.....	June 1938
Aston-Martin 11.9 h.p., 2-seater.....	Jan. 1930	Lagonda 3-litre, 6-cyl., 4-seater.....	March 1932	Tatra 4-cyl., 1,154 c.c., coupe.....	Dec. 1932
Aston-Martin 2-litre Speed model...	May 1938	Lagonda 2-litre, 4-cyl., twin o.h.c., 4-seater (1928) .....	March 1931	Terraplane, 9-cyl. 29 h.p., 4-str.....	July 1935
Aston-Martin 1935 Ulster .....	Aug. 1937	Lancia Aprilia, Type 238, saloon.....	June 1938	Triumph 2-litre "Vitesse Six" saloon .....	April 1935
Auburn 30 h.p., 8-cyl., supercharged 2-seater .....	June 1935	Lea-Francis 1½-litre supercharged T.T. 2-seater (1929) .....	June 1934	Triumph 10 h.p. "Gloria Southern Cross" 2-seater.....	June 1935
Austin Seven Boyd Carpenter 2-str.	Sept. 1930	Lea-Francis 1½-litre supercharged special T.T. 2-seater.....	Sept. 1933	Triumph 10 h.p. "Gloria" saloon...	Jan. 1934
Austin Seven "65" 2-seater.....	Jan. 1934	Lea-Francis 1½-litre supercharged "Hyper" 4-seater .....	Aug. 1930	Triumph Nine "Southern Cross" 4-seater .....	June 1932
BENTLEY 3½-litre, 6-cyl., Vanden Plas, 4-seater.....	Nov. 1933	Lea-Francis, 14 h.p., 6-light saloon...	Dec. 1938	Triumph Eight "Gnat" 2-seater... ..	Aug. 1931
Bentley 4½-litre, 6-cyl., Park Ward saloon .....	June 1936	Leyland Eight (1929), 2-seater.....	Feb. 1938	Triumph Eight, supercharged 2-str.	Dec. 1929
Bentley 6½-litre, 6-cyl., long-chassis saloon (1928).....	Dec. 1936	MERCEDES-BENZ Type 540K, 5.4-litre, 8-cyl., supercharged, 2-str....	April 1937	Triumph Dolomite 14/60 saloon.....	June 1937
Bentley 4½-litre Vanden Plas coupe	Aug. 1938	Mercedes-Benz Type 500, 5-litre, 8-cyl., supercharged, 2-seater.....	Nov. 1934	VALE-SPECIAL 832 c.c. 2-seater... ..	Aug. 1933
Bentley 8-litre sports 2-seater.....	April 1938	Mercedes-Benz 12.40 h.p., supercharged 2-seater .....	June 1925	Vauxhall 30/98 O.E. 4-seater (1925) .....	Jan. 1936
Bugatti 3.3-litre 8-cyl., Type 57 saloon .....	May 1934	Mercedes-Benz 36.220 h.p. supercharged, 2-4-seater .....	April 1928	Vauxhall 30/98 O.E. 4-seater (1924).....	Dec. 1930
Bugatti 2.3-litre 8-cyl., Type 55, supercharged, 2-seater.....	July 1932	Mercedes-Benz 33.180 h.p., supercharged, 4-seater .....	Aug. 1927	Vauxhall 20/60 h.p. "Hurlingham" 2-seater .....	Feb. 1930
Bugatti 2.3-litre, 8-cyl., Type 43, supercharged 4-seater (1930).....	Dec. 1932	Mercedes-Benz 2.3-litre, saloon.....	April 1938	Vauxhall 17 h.p., 6-cyl., "Cadet" saloon .....	Sept. 1931
Bugatti 2.3-litre 8-cyl., Type 43, supercharged 4-seater.....	May 1930	M.G., 6-cyl., Mark I, 4-seater.....	May 1931	Vauxhall 14 h.p. "Stratford" 4-str.	Sept. 1933
Bugatti 3-litre, 8-cyl., Type 44, saloon	July 1928	M.G. Magna, "L" 2-seater.....	Nov. 1933	WINDSOR 4-cyl., 11 h.p., "Special" 2-3-seater .....	Nov. 1926
CITROEN, Twelve f.w.d. saloon.....	July 1938	M.G. Midget "P" 2-seater.....	Aug. 1934	Wolseley Hornet Swallow 2-seater (1933) .....	April 1934
Crossley 20/70 h.p., 4-cyl., s.v. 4-str.	Nov. 1925	M.G. Midget "J3" supercharged, 2-seater .....	May 1933	Wolseley Hornet (12.08 h.p.) saloon	Sept. 1930
Crossley Ten, 1½-litre "Regis" saloon .....	Jan. 1936	M.G. Six Mark I, saloon.....	Aug. 1930		
Crossley Ten, 1,122 c.c. 4-seater.....	April 1932	M.G. Midget Double-Twelve racing 2-seater.....	June 1930 & Aug. 1930		
Crouch Anzani 12.30 h.p., 2-seater... ..	Aug. 1924	M.G. Midget "J1" 850 c.c. 2-str....	Sept. 1932		
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		M.G. Midget "PB" 2-seater.....	April 1936		
		M.G. 14/40 4-cyl., 3-speed, 4-seater... ..	Oct. 1925		
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